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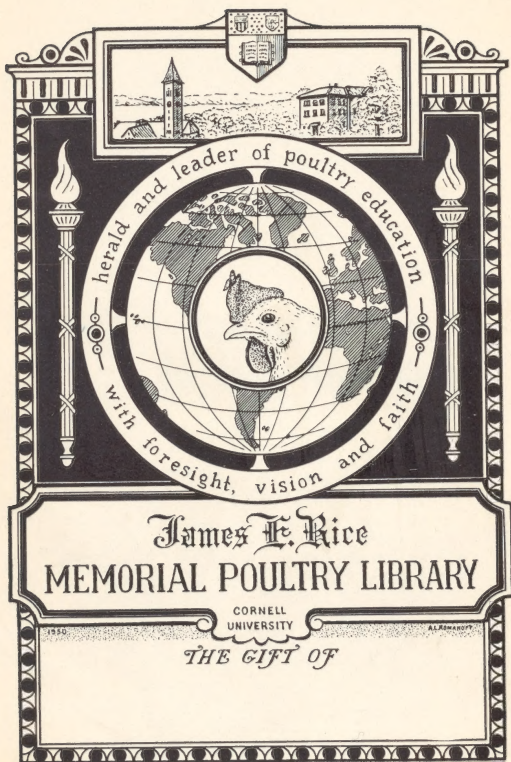
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FOWLS.

Printed by HENNINGHAM & HOLLIS, Mount Street, Grosvenor Square.

FOWLS:
A PLAIN AND FAMILIAR TREATISE
ON THE
PRINCIPAL BREEDS.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR BREEDING AND EXHIBITION.

Fourth Edition, revised, corrected and enlarged.

WITH WHICH IS REPRINTED

THE DORKING FOWL:
Its Management and Feeding for the Table.

SIXTH EDITION.

BY

JOHN BAILY,

118, MOUNT STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE.

LONDON:

HENNINGHAM AND HOLLIS,

MOUNT STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE.

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PREFACE.

I HAVE endeavoured in this the sixth edition of "THE DORKING FOWL," and the fourth of "FOWLS" in general, to add the experience of the three years that have passed since the last was published.

That which I have printed is all practical.

I heartily thank those who, by their continued support, have rendered necessary so many editions of an unpretending work.

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FOWLS.

CHAPTER I.

IN order to divide the subject of poultry into chapters, I will begin first with Poultry Houses. It is only of late years these have been much thought of: in large farm-yards, where there are cart-houses, calf-pens, pig-styes, cattle-sheds, shelter under the eaves of barns, and numerous other roosting places, not omitting the trees in the immediate vicinity, I do not think they are required, for fowls will generally do better by choosing for themselves; and it is beyond a doubt more healthy for them to be spread about in this manner, than to be confined to one place. But a love of order on the one hand, and a dread of thieves or foxes on the other, will sometimes make it desirable to have a proper poultry house.

The exterior is a matter of taste, but internally the comfort and well-doing of the poultry must be the only consideration; and the higher the house is, the less likelihood there is of disease or taint. Another advantage of having it lofty is, that the current

through the building, being far above the fowls, purifies the air without interfering with their comfort. They do not like a draught, and if, while they are perching, an opening is made admitting one, they will be seen to rouse up to alter their position, and at last to seek some other place to avoid it.

The best guide in all these things is nature, and an observer will always find the poultry choose a sheltered spot. They also carefully avoid being exposed to cold winds. The poultry house should not open to the north or east. The perches should not be more than twenty-four inches from the ground; none are better than fir-poles about fourteen inches in circumference, sawn in half in the centre. They should be supported on ledges fastened to each side of the house. This affords every facility for removing them for purposes of cleaning, at the same time that it is very simple. All perches should be level, none higher than the other.

My reason for being thus particular in my description of the perch is that to mistakes in its construction and position, many disorders in the feet of fowls may be attributed.

For instance, it has been complained of that large fowls become lame, and what we term bumble-footed, more especially when carefully kept in poultry houses. Now the reason for it, is obvious, their perches are

too high. In the morning the cock flies from the perch, twelve or fourteen feet; the whole weight of his body, added to the impetus of his downward flight, brings him in contact with the ground. Often, from the violence of his fall, small gravel stones are forced through the skin of the balls of his feet. They fester, and if that does not occur, they become so tender that the bird dare no longer perch; he roosts on the ground, and, for want of the necessary exercise, his legs swell at the knees, and he becomes a sleepy useless fowl. This will be avoided by having low perches. Some well-informed authorities deem high perches of no consequence, provided the fowls have a plank, with cross pieces, reaching them from the ground. But I believe it will be found these are only used to ascend, the descent is done by flight.

It is very necessary the house should be well ventilated: it may be done either by an iron grating, of an ornamental character if requisite, or by the omission of bricks in the building, but the ventilators should be considerably above the perches, and in severe weather, may be entirely closed. It is an improvement to have a ceiling to the house. A very slight and common one will do, and it is not absolutely necessary. It should have five large openings in it, a large one in the centre, and one a few inches from each corner. The ventilators should be above

the ceiling, the vitiated air will then ascend through the openings, and be carried off by the draught, which may be considerable as the fowls will be protected from it. I repeat it is not necessary.

The house should be often cleaned out, and the walls lime-whited. The floor should be of earth well rammed down, and covered with loose gravel, two inches deep. This is easily kept clean by drawing a broom lightly over it every morning; and if it is raked, it is kept even and fresh.

There should be an opening towards the west or south-west, for the fowls to go in and out, and this should never be closed, as fowls are fond of rambling early in the morning, and picking up such food as is to be found at break of day.

There should be no poultry allowed to roost in the house but fowls; no ducks, turkeys, or any other sort; neither must there be too many fowls, lest the house become tainted and the fowls sickly. This last remark applies equally to a farm-yard.

The poultry house should have three compartments: one, the largest, for roosting, another for laying, and another for sitting. In the two latter, boxes should be placed round the house, but on the floor; all that is required is to fasten two boards against the wall, each being twenty inches high, the same length, and eighteen inches apart. This



affords the hen all the privacy she requires. About eighteen inches from the wall, a wooden bead should be put, just high enough to prevent eggs from rolling out.

It may not be out of place to mention, that as no hen should be allowed to lay where the others are sitting, and difficulty may be experienced with some from their almost unconquerable repugnance to sit anywhere but where they have been laying, it may be done in this way:—move the hen and her eggs at night into the sitting house, and cover her till the morning, by hanging sacks, or old carpét, or matting over the boards forming her sitting place, and she will remain quiet and satisfied.

Where space and economy have to be very closely considered, two houses may be made enough, by putting the laying boxes in the roosting house. They should occupy one end of the building and be clear of the perches. The door of the sitting house should be always shut when hens are on their eggs, and it should therefore have a window to open in the summer, but to shut quite close in the winter.

When the window is however open, a wire frame should supply its place, to prevent laying hens from intruding.

There is one addition to a poultry yard so advantageous to chickens, that those who have once tried it will never be without it. I mean a covered run for them, to be used in wet weather. Any sort of roof will do, and it should be in a sheltered spot, running the length of the yard, and projecting ten or twelve feet or more from the wall or paling against which it is placed. It should be exposed to the sun, and sheltered from cold winds. The floor should be raised above the level of the yard, and covered with sand and wood ashes, some inches deep. The hens with chickens may be put here under their ribs, in wet or unkind weather; and it affords at all times a favourite resort for poultry to bask, and take their dust bath, which is essential to their well-doing. The flooring should be higher at the back than in front.

There is nothing better for the bottom of a nest, than a turf cut with short heath, broom, or grass upon it: this should be put at the bottom, and some straw at top. A nest so made is healthier for the hen and chickens, as it admits of sufficient ventilation, and is always free from vermin.

If there be difficulty in causing the hens at first

to take to the laying compartment, it is easy to close the roosting house during the day, for a day or two, when they will take to the other, which may be similarly closed at night. But this must be only for a time. It is essential both doors and windows of roosting places should be open during the day for purposes of ventilation. The floor should slant every way towards the door, to facilitate the cleaning, and to avoid anything like wet. It should be well cleaned every day, and it should be raised above the level of the surrounding ground; it should have no artificial floor, such as boards, bricks, tiles, or stones of any kind, but should be of good hard earth and loose gravel, not disposed to be muddy from the going in and out of its occupants in wet weather. It should open on grounds perfectly free for the poultry to run in, and if a high dry spot on light soil can be chosen, so much the better; the roof should be quite air and water tight.

I deem it my duty to publish the result of much intercourse with breeders of poultry, and therefore here insert two methods, one followed by an amateur, and the other by a breeder, for preventing crooked breasts. Both have been successful. The amateur has made his perches larger and flatter, so that the fowls rest on the perch instead of clasping it. The breeder has raised some perches only eighteen inches

from the ground ; he has covered them with straw till they present a flat surface, on which the fowls rest. The latter perch has been used for Cochinchinas only.

A gentleman lately told me he had been very successful in raising early chickens in the north of Scotland, and he attributed much of it to the following arrangements. He had always from twenty to thirty oxen or other cattle fattening in a long building ; he made his poultry house to join this, and had ventilators and openings made in the partition, so that the heat of the cattle-shed passed into the fowl-house.

Little good has resulted from the use of stoves, or hot water pipes, for poultry ; but by skilfully taking advantage of every circumstance like that above mentioned, and by consulting aspect and position, many valuable helps are obtained.

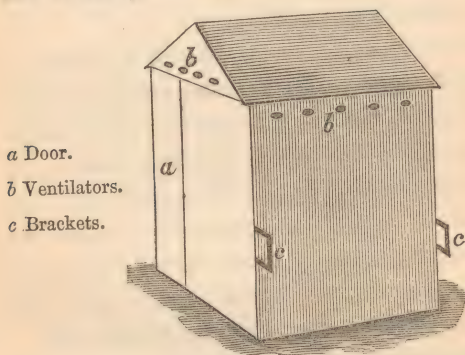
I would also mention one thing I have noticed since I wrote the foregoing. I had some fowls in a large out-house, where they were well provided with perches ; as there was plenty of room, I put some small faggots cut for firing at one extremity, and I found many of the fowls deserted their perches to roost on the faggots, which they evidently preferred. Ashes, and wood ashes before any others, are excellent things to put in poultry houses. Another

valuable thing for fowls, and especially for laying hens, is to throw down near their haunts or houses a good basketful of bricklayers' rubbish; they all dust themselves in it; it destroys vermin, and the hens pick out the pieces of lime and mortar which serve to form the shell of their eggs; attention to this will promote their health, and will prevent many from eating their eggs, as it is certain that at first it is the shell that is wanted.

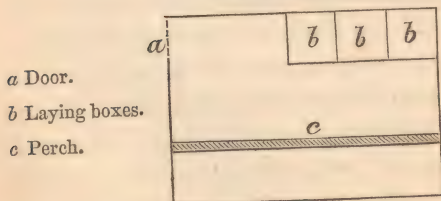
By the kind permission of a Scottish gentleman, I am enabled to publish the following valuable extract from one of his letters: "I perceive some remarks of yours in reference to floors of poultry houses. In country places the difficulty of keeping out rats would be an objection to a gravel floor, unless the ground were first dug out to the depth of twelve or fourteen inches, and filled with stones about the size of an egg and smaller, and grouted with lime—in fact, a concrete—and then, on that, gravel well beaten down. A mixture of cow-dung and water, about the consistency of paint, on the surface of the floor, put on no thicker than paint, gives it a hard surface which will bear sweeping down. It is used by the natives of India, not only for the floors, but often for the walls of their houses, and is supposed to be healthy in its application, and to keep down vermin." The walls of every poultry house should

be often lime-whited : it destroys vermin, it sweetens the house, and is both easy and inexpensive ; once a fortnight is often enough.

I will conclude with one more remark : it is not necessary to build expensive houses. I kept for years a cock and four hens in a wooden house. It is six feet high in the centre, six feet square inside, and is thus planned :—



- a* Door.
b Ventilators.
c Brackets.



- a* Door.
b Laying boxes.
c Perch.

Such a house will cost, being made of elm, from forty to fifty shillings, and will last many years. It

is portable by passing a pole through the brackets *c c* on each side. It has no floor, being put on the ground. The boards will be found to split from exposure to the weather, but that is not of the slightest consequence. Healthy fowls are not tender, and it may besides be prevented by a coating of tar or paint.

CHAPTER II.

It is often desired to keep several sorts of fowls, to have each breed pure, and yet to have but one run for all. The only plan I can suggest to accomplish this is to have separate roosting houses, each with a small netted or wired space in front; let one be appropriated for each sort; the hens of every description may of course run in the open space all day, but at night they must be compelled to enter their respective places,—and, indeed, little compulsion is necessary, as they will soon take to them, and refuse to go into any other. For the well-doing of the fowls, and to prevent crossing, the hens must be let out early in the morning, and the trap-door then

securely closed till the evening, when they will want to roost.

A separate place must be provided for them to lay in, and after the season is past for rearing chickens the fowls may all run together, if the cocks can agree sufficiently well, till the approach of the breeding season renders separation necessary. No time has ever been fixed as necessary to elapse before hens that have been running with cocks of divers breeds, and afterwards been placed with their legitimate partners, can be depended upon to produce purely bred chickens; I am disposed to think at least two months. Time of year may have much to do with it. In the winter the escape of a hen from one run to the other, or the intrusion of a cock, is of little moment; but it may be serious in the spring, and destroy the hopes of a season.

The rules of poultry houses are not without exceptions, except in some particulars, which I have elsewhere pointed out; but as this is an unusual plan, I may be asked to describe the sort of house and run I would advise for each cock and six hens, the only stipulation being, that if the dimensions are altered, it shall be in the way of increase,

The house should be ten or twelve feet in height, six in length, and three or four in depth; the door at one extremity, not more than twenty-one inches

wide, and opening into the little enclosed space, which must face the south or south-west; inside should be two perches running across the building, two feet from the ground.

The space in front must not be less than eight feet square, but the larger it is the better; it must be securely covered at top and all round; there must be a slide to lift up in front, for the hens to go out, and this must be fastened down to prevent the escape of one of the cocks, even for an hour or two.

This, at first sight, may appear a very troublesome proceeding, but it is not so in fact. It must be borne in mind it is an expedient to enable the possessor of one meadow, to indulge his fancy to the same extent as he does, who is fortunate enough to possess as many farms as breeds of fowls. This plan has one advantage over that of scattering the birds about, viz., they are always at hand, and to be seen if required.

Where only two or three sorts are kept, this plan may be varied by dividing the day, and allowing each sort to run at large during one portion of it. In this case, be careful to shut one set up, before the other is let out. The slides should be locked or fastened so that children cannot let the cocks out.

CHAPTER III.

It is difficult to assign any portion of food as a sufficient quantity for a given number of fowls, because so much depends on the nature of their run, and the quantity and quality of food to be found. For instance, in a farm-yard where the barn door is always open, and thrashing continually going on, adult birds require little or no feeding, but if this supply be stopped, then they must be fed by hand; again, if they have free access to stubbles, they will get a good portion of their food there. I had some fowls a few years since turned out in some stubbles I rented for the purpose—they roosted in the hedge-rows, and were only fed a little night and morning for the sake of getting them together to count them. I never had any do so well, but this will only last till the beginning of November; by that time they have picked the stubble clean, and indeed from the middle of October the quantity of food given had to be increased daily. A good healthy growing fowl will consume weekly two-thirds of a gallon of corn, wheat or barley; and if the bird come from a walk where it has been badly kept, it will for a time eat more than this; but after it has got up in flesh and condition, it gradually eats less, and two-thirds, or even half the

quantity, will keep it in good condition. Again, the weather must be consulted; in mild damp weather they prowls about and pick up many things, as insects, worms, young herbage—these all assist; but in frost, and above all in snow, they require generous feeding. To use a very homely poultry wife's expression, there is then "no scratch" for them.

Do not spare good food for chickens, they require plenty while they are growing, and they will make a good return in health and vigour when arrived at maturity. If it be possible, let them eat their green food, as lettuce, &c., in a growing state; it is not only more nourishing, but they eat it with greater pleasure, because it resists the pull necessary to tear it, and it is more natural. Those who are obliged to keep fowls in confinement, should have large sods or turfs of grass cut, and let the earth be heavy enough to enable them to tear off the grass, without being obliged to drag the sod about with them. A garden dungheap overgrown with artichokes, mallows, &c., is an excellent covert for chickens, especially in hot weather. They find shelter, and meet with many insects there.

Where there is a family, and consequent consumption, there are many auxiliaries, such as bread from toast and water, groats that have been used for gruel, soup and stock meat. But it must be borne

in mind these are in the place of other food, and not in addition to it. When this can be had other food should be diminished. I am not an advocate for cooked vegetables, except potatoes; boiled cabbage is worse than nothing—in fact it must be borne in mind, corn, either whole, ground, or crushed, is the staple food, and the others are helps. Do not give fowls meat, but always have the bones thrown out to them after dinner; they enjoy picking them, and perform the operation perfectly. Do not feed on raw meat, it makes fowls quarrelsome, and gives them a propensity to pick each other, especially in moulting time, if the accustomed meat be withheld. Hundreds have purchased birds, above all, Cochin Chinas, on account of their great weight, which, being the result of meat feeding, has proved a real disease, incapacitating them from breeding. When proper food is provided, all is not accomplished; it must be properly given. No plan is so extravagant or so injurious as to throw down heaps once or twice per day. They should have it scattered as far and wide as possible, that the birds may be long and healthily employed in finding it, and may not accomplish in a few minutes that which should occupy them for hours. For this reason every sort of feeder or hopper is bad. It is the nature of fowls to take a grain at a time, and to pick grass and dirt

with it, which assist digestion; but if, contrary to this, they are enabled to eat corn by mouthful, their crops are soon overfilled, and they seek relief in excessive draughts of water. Nothing is more injurious than this, and the inactivity that attends the discomfort caused by it, lays the foundation of many disorders. While speaking of food, it may be observed that when from travelling or other cause a fowl has fasted a long time—say thirty or forty-eight hours—it should not be allowed any hard food, neither should it have water at discretion; for the first three hours it should have only a small portion say a teacupful of sopped bread very wet, so much so as to serve for food and drink, afterwards some plain bread and water, and then with a crop full be turned out. If the bird appear to suffer much from the journey, instead of bread and water, give bread and beer.

But the food given to them by hand is not all that is essential. There is the natural food, sought out and divided by the hen to her progeny, such as insects of all kinds, peculiar herbage, &c. And it is here well to remark, that where fowls are bred for exhibition, or other special purposes, as cocks for fighting, a hen should not be allowed to rear more than six chickens, as she cannot find this food for a greater number, and if they are intended to be

superior to all others, they must have greater, or at least equal advantages, with those they will have to compete against. For economy it will be found that ground food is far more profitable than whole corn ; and the most beneficial in every way, both for well-doing of the birds, and economy of outlay, is ground oats. The whole corn should be finely ground, without taking away any part in the shape of bran. This should be slaked with water, and thrown on the ground so long as the birds will run after it ; but when they cease to do so it should be discontinued. If two fowls will not run after one piece they do not want it. They should be fed in this way morning and afternoon, or evening, and if their run affords no food they should have a little corn scattered among the grass on their haunts. In most poultry yards more than half the food is wasted. The same quantity is thrown down day after day, without reference to time of year, alteration of numbers, or variation of appetite, and that which is not eaten, is trodden about, or taken by small birds. Many a poultry yard is coated with corn and meal. As it is essential fowls should have fresh mixed food, a careful poultry feeder will always rather mix twice than have any left, and it is often beneficial for the birds to have a scanty meal. They can find numerous things wherewith to eke

out, and things that are beneficial to them ; but if they are kept constantly full they will not seek them. The advantage of scattering the food is, that all then get their share ; while if it is thrown only on a small space the master birds get the greater part, while the others wait around. Indian corn has been much used of late ; the result of all my experiments has been, that it is useful for a change, but it is not a good food by itself. Fowls are very fond of it, and once or twice per week it may be advantageously given. The best argument for its use is that the small birds cannot eat it. Many have been discouraged, and some deterred from keeping fowls by the expense of feeding. If they will themselves attend to the consumption for a week, and follow the method I have pointed out, they may arrive at a fair average, and they will be surprised to find how much greater the cost has been than was necessary. It is most essential not to invent or to supply imaginary wants in fowls—they do not require coaxing to eat, and wherever food can be seen lying on the ground in a yard there is waste and mismanagement. I have seen food enough for three days brought out for one meal, and was thought hard-hearted when I stopped it. But the poultry woman was sensible, and after a week she acknowledged her birds were better, although their food was reduced two-thirds.

The economy is not in food alone, they are large gainers in health, and the pleasure of keeping is much increased. The tendency of over-feeding is to make them squat about under sheds and cart-houses, and instead of spreading over a meadow or stubble in little active parties, searching hedges and banks and basking on their sides in the dust, with opened feathers, and one wing raised to get all the glorious sun's heat that they can, they stand about a listless pampered troop. To lay much better, to breed better chickens, and to last longer, are the results of diminished, not increased expense, and all that is required is a little personal superintendence at first, till the new system is understood and appreciated. In most yards the birds are overfed, and there is waste in nearly all.

It is common for those who undertake to be poultry correspondents, to be asked, what is the food to make fowls lay? High feeding of any sort will do it, but more particularly hempseed, and tallow-chandler's greaves. The former is given whole, the latter should be chopped fine, and then put in a bucket and covered with boiling water. The mouth of the bucket should be covered with a double sack, or other cloth, so completely as to exclude air and confine the steam till the greaves are thoroughly softened. When they are nearly cold they may be

given. These will make them lay, but it is only for a time ; premature decrepitude comes on, and disease in many forms appears.

The most common is dropsy, and of an incurable character. The fowl that would have laid for years, in the common course of nature, being forced to produce in two that which should have been the work of several, loses all beauty and usefulness, and yet it is often considered matter of wonder that the most prolific hen in the yard should suddenly become barren. The food for small chickens will be found in the second chapter of the Dorking Fowl, printed at the end of this book.

CHAPTER IV.

AMONG the diseases of fowls, nothing is so fatal to the bird, or so vexatious to the fancier, as roup.

Very close observation and extensive experience, have taught me the first premonitory symptom is a peculiar breathing. The fowl appears in perfect health for the time, but it will be seen that the skin hanging from the lower beak, and to which the

wattle is attached, is inflated and emptied at every breath ;—I have noticed it for years, but have been diffident of making it public till I was sure. I have now gained evidence that convinces me I am justified in publishing it. Such a bird should always be removed.

The disease may be caused, first, by cold damp weather and easterly winds, when fowls of weakly habit and bad constitutions will sicken of it, but healthy, strong birds will not. Again, if by any accidental cause they are long without food and water, and then have an unlimited quantity of drink and whole corn given to them, they gorge themselves, and ill health is the consequence ; but confinement is the chief cause, and above all being shut up in tainted coops. Nothing is so difficult as to keep a fowl healthy in confinement in London ; two days will often suffice to change the bright bold cock into the spiritless, drooping, rousy fowl, carrying contagion wherever he goes.

But all the roup does not come from London ; often in the spring of the year the cocks fight, and it is necessary to take one away ; search is made for something to put him in, and a rabbit-hutch, or open basket is found, wherein he is confined, and often irregularly supplied with food, till pity for his altered condition causes him to be let out ;—but he has

become roupy, and the whole yard suffers. I dwell at length on this, because it is of all disorders the worst, and because, although a cure may seem to be effected, yet at moulting, or any time when out of condition, the fowl will be more or less affected with it again.

One thing is here deserving notice. The result of the attention paid to poultry of late years has been to improve the health and the constitutions of the birds. Roup is not nearly so common as it was, nor is it so difficult of cure. It went on unnoticed formerly, till it had become chronic, and it would not be difficult to name yards that have now a good reputation, but which a few years since never had a healthy fowl. It is now treated at the outset, if seen, but the improved management in most places renders it a rare occurrence. The cold which precedes it may often be cured by feeding twice a day with stale crusts of bread soaked in strong beer.

The suspected fowl should be removed directly, and if there be plenty without it, and if it be not of any breed that makes its preservation a matter of moment, it should be killed.

There is little doubt of a cure if it be taken in the first stage, but if the eyelids be swollen, the nostrils closed, the breathing difficult, and the discharge foetid and continual, it will be a long time before the bird

is well. In this stage it may be termed the consumption of fowls, and with them as in human beings there are some cases beyond cure. However I may differ from some eminent and talented amateurs, I do not hesitate to say it is contagious in a high degree. Where fowls are wasting without any apparent disorder, a tea-spoonful of cod liver oil per day will often be found an efficacious remedy.

I have discovered a most valuable remedy for this disorder. It will be found advertised at the end of this book. It is now in general use, and any number of testimonials could be easily collected and printed.

I will next mention a disease common to chickens at an early age, I mean the gapes ; these are caused by numerous small worms in the throat ; the best method I know of getting rid of them, is to take a hen's tail feather, strip it to within an inch of the end, put it down the chicken's throat, twist it sharply round several times, and draw it quickly out, the worms will be found entangled in the feathers. When this is not effectual in removing them, if the tip of the feather be dipped in turpentine, it will kill them, but it must be put down the *wind-pipe*, not the *gullet*. I have always thought these are got from impure water, and I have been informed by a gentleman who enquires closely into those things, that having placed

some of the worms taken from the throat of a chicken, and some from the bottom of a water butt where rain water had remained for a long time, in a microscope, he found them identical. I have never met with gapes where fowls had a running stream to go to for water. Camphor is perhaps the best cure there is for gapes, and if some is constantly kept in the water with which they are supplied for drinking, they take it readily. This has been *most successful*.

There is also another description of gapes, arising probably, from internal fever; I have found meal mixed with milk and salts, a good remedy. They are sometimes caused by a hard substance at the tip of the tongue; in this case, remove it sharply with the thumb nail, and let it bleed freely. A gentleman mentioned this to me, who had met with it in an old French writer on poultry.

Sometimes a fowl will droop almost suddenly, after being in perfect health; if caught directly, it will be found it has eaten something that has hardened in the crop; pour plenty of warm water down the throat, and loosen the food till it is soft, then give a table spoonful of castor oil, or about as much jalap as will lay on a shilling, mixed in butter, make a pill of it and slide it into the crop; the fowl will be well in the morning. Cayenne pepper or chalk, or both mixed with meal, are the best remedies for scouring.

When fowls are restless, dissatisfied, and continually scratching, it is often caused by lice ; these can be got rid of by supplying their houses or haunts with plenty of ashes, especially wood ashes, in which they may dust themselves, and the bath is rendered more effectual by adding some black sulphur to the dust.

It must be borne in mind, all birds must have the bath ; some use water, some dust ; but both from the same instinctive knowledge of its necessity. Where a shallow stream of water runs across a gravel road, it will be found full of small birds washing ; where a bank is dry and well exposed to the sun, birds of all kinds will be found burying themselves in dust.

Sometimes fowls appear cramped, they have difficulty in standing upright, and rest on their knees ; in large young birds, especially cocks, this is merely the effect of weakness from fast growth, and the difficulty their long weak legs have in carrying their bodies. But if it lasts after they are getting age then it must be seen to ; if their roosting place has a wooden, stone, or brick floor, there is the cause ; but if this is not the case, stimulating food, such as I have described for other diseases, must be given. Fowls like human beings are subject to atmospherical influence, and if healthy fowls seem suddenly

attacked with illness that cannot be explained, a copious meal of bread steeped in ale, will often prove a speedy and effectual remedy. For adults, nothing will restore strength sooner than eggs boiled hard, and chopped fine. If these remedies are not successful, then the constitution is at fault, and good healthy cocks must be sought to replace those whose progeny is faulty.

Jalap and Rue are both good poultry medicines, but if the ground is not over-stocked, if they are well fed and have clean and fresh water, there will be no disease. Nothing is so bad as impure water, it is a slow poison. If they are obliged to drink from ponds and ditches infected by being receptacles for all the sewage of a house, and for all the drainings of stables, cow-houses, and pig-sties, or rendered filthy from the decayed vegetable matter, as leaves from overhanging trees and shrubs—it is impossible under such circumstances they can do well.

Prevention is better than cure—the cause of many diseases is to be found in enfeebled and bad constitutions; and these are the consequences of breeding-in. Objection is taken to the use of the word “cross,” and justly so; but the introduction of fresh blood is absolutely necessary every second year, and even every year is better. Many fanciers who breed for feather, fear to do so lest false colours should appear, but they should

recollect one of the first symptoms of degeneracy is a foul feather; for instance, the Sebright bantam loses lacing, and becomes patched, the Spanish fowls throw white feathers, and pigeons practise numberless freaks. An experiment was once tried which will illustrate this. A pair of black pigeons was put in a large loft, and allowed to breed without any introduction of fresh blood. They were well and carefully fed. At the end of two years an account of them was taken. They had greatly multiplied, but only one-third of the number were black, and the others had become spotted with white, then patched, and then quite white, while these latter had not only lost the characteristics of the breed from which they descended, but they were weak and deformed in every possible way. The introduction of fresh blood prevents all this; and the breeder for prizes, or who wishes to have the best of the sort he keeps, should never let a fowl escape him if it possesses the qualities he seeks. Such are not always to be had when wanted, and the best strains we have of every sort, have been got up by this plan.

There is one thing worthy of remark. None of our fowls imported from warmer climates are subject to roup—as Spanish, Cochins, and Malays. But those from a damp country like Holland, seem to have the seeds of it always in them.

CHAPTER V.

COCHIN CHINA FOWLS will always form in themselves a history of poultry. The first were possessed by Her Majesty. This gave them great importance. Then properties were attributed to them, such as never fell to the lot of any fowls. They were scarce, and this made people anxious to possess some. There is never a want that cannot be supplied, and Cochin China Fowls, or birds dignified with that name, were imported or manufactured. They were sold for large sums, and as buyers were assured they were pure, and paid heavily for their specimens, they spread the delusion, although the fifth claw of the Dorking, and the head and comb of the Malay, continually gave evidence of foreign elements in their composition. But while late years have abundantly proved the interest in poultry which first began to be taken some time since, to be a sound and enduring one, yet we cannot help agreeing with many who contend that it was no mis-nomer to call the early Cochin China fancy by its familiar name, the Cochin mania. The prices made were ridiculous, a hundred good Cochins would purchase a small farm, and a cock and two hens from favourite strains, were thought cheap if bought for less than fifty

pounds. Had these birds been shy breeders—if like song birds the produce of a pair were four or at most five birds in the year, prices might have been maintained, but as they are marvellous layers, they increased. A book might be written on the schemes and counter-schemes employed by those who kept the fowls, and those who lived in the neighbourhood; the first to destroy all vitality in the egg before it was sold, the other to discover some expedient by which it could be saved or restored. Both failed at times, while they succeeded now and then. We know one large breeder of these birds who sent his eggs to market without comment, and many an omelette or batter pudding was made with eggs bought twenty for a shilling, the fellows to which brought from four to five shillings each soon after, and the produce of which, if hatched, would have realized pounds at a few months old. This gentleman had the fowls years before he knew their value, and the best birds we ever had were hatched from eggs bought for eating. They bred in large numbers, and consequently became cheaper, and then the mania ended, because those who dealt most largely in them did so, not from a love of the birds or the pursuit, but as a speculation. As they had over-praised them before, they now treated them with contempt. Anything like a moderate profit

was despised, and the birds were left to their own merits. These were sufficient to ensure their popularity, and now after fluctuating in value more than anything except shares, after being over praised, and then abused, they have remained favourites with a large portion of the public, sell at a remunerating price, and form one of the largest classes at all the great exhibitions.

Many years have passed since the foregoing was written, but it has proved true. The fifth claws and Malay heads have disappeared, and thereby proved they *never* had anything to do with the breed. It may not be out of place to mention here that although the mania has ceased, there is still a good demand for them, and that birds of unusual merit will frequently sell at sums varying from five to twenty pounds each.

The Cochin China cock is a bold, upright bird, with erect, indented, single comb rising from the beak over the nostril, projecting over the neck, and then slanting away underneath to allow the root to be fixed on the top of the head. The beak is strong and curved, the eye bold, the face red, the wattle pendant, and the ear-lobe very long, hanging much lower than in other fowls. He is a bird of noble carriage, and differs from most other fowls in the following points. He has little tail, indeed in very fine specimens it may be said, they have none ; they

have the hackle large and long ; it falls from the neck to the back, and from its termination there is a small gradual rise to where the tail should be, but where its apology, some glossy, slightly twisted feathers fall over like those of an ostrich. The last joint of the wing folds up, so that the ends of the flight feathers are concealed by the middle ones, and their extremities are again covered by the copious saddle. The next peculiarities of these birds, are, what is technically called, "the fluff" and "the crow." The former is composed of beautifully soft, long feathers, covering the thighs till they project considerably, and garnishing all the hinder parts of the bird in the same manner ; so much so, that to view the widest part of the Cochin China cock you must look at him behind. His crow is to the crow of other cocks what the railway whistle is to that of the errand boy in the streets, it is loud, hoarse, and amazingly prolonged. They seem to delight in it, and will continue it till they are on tiptoe, and are compelled to exchange their usual erect position for one in which the neck is curved and the head brought down to the level of the knees. Viewing the broadside it will be seen, there is in this bird a deficiency of breast, it slants off in a straight line from the end of the neck to the beginning of the fluff that covers the upper part of the thigh.

The pullet has most points in common with the

cock. Her head is beautiful, the comb small, very upright, with many indentations, the face, if I may use the term, intelligent. Her body is much deeper in proportion than that of the cock; her fluff is softer, having almost a silky texture; her carriage is less erect. She has none of the falling feathers at the tail, but the little she has, is upright, and should come to a blunt point, nothing like the regular rounded tails of other hens. In both, the legs should be yellow, and well feathered to the toes. Very particular fanciers require that the outer toe of the feet should be much shorter than the others, and that the web between the toes should be larger than in other fowls. Flesh-coloured legs are admissible, but green, black, or white, are defects. No other bird shows its shape in feathers so plainly as this does, and with an old fashioned Chinese puzzle, composed of a number of small triangular pieces of wood, it would be easy to give a good notion of a Cochin China hen.

In buying them, avoid long tails, clean legs, fifth toes, and double combs. Above all take care the cock has not, nor ever has had, sickle feathers.

I have endeavoured to describe the best birds of their species; such may be always obtained, and afterwards bred, but they will be the pickings of the yard.

The colours are Buff, Lemon, Cinnamon, Grouse, Partridge, White, and Black. The two last are of more recent introduction than the others. The white were principally bred from one pair imported and given to the Dean of Worcester. They afterwards became the property of Mrs. Herbert, of Powick, whose name will always be identified with them. It is imperative these fowls should have yellow legs. The origin of the black is still shrouded in mystery. It is said they were first produced by the cross between the buff and white. Be that as it may, there is one peculiarity about them, that the cocks though perfectly pure in colour till about six months old, after that age become brown in the hackle, frequently throw red feathers in the wings, and are often found on close examination to have white under-feathers, and others barred with white. A description of a fowl is now hardly complete without a few instructions for classing for exhibition. Both grouse and partridge hens require a black-breasted red cock. There should be no mixture of colour whatever, the hackle and saddle should be red or gold, and every feather striped down its centre with black. Buff and cinnamon birds are always classed together, but very meritorious fowls often lose the distinction they otherwise deserve, by both colours being in the same pen. The set of

competing birds must all be either cinnamon or buff, and especial care should be taken to avoid the common error of putting a buff cock with cinnamon hens. There are two shades of cinnamon birds. The first are the silver cinnamon. The hens have a body plumage of pinky or French white, with a yellow, or a light brown hackle. The cocks should be of light plumage, almost white under-feathers, with yellow hackle and saddle, and yellow feathers intermixed with the light all over the body. The other cinnamon pullets or hens have bodies of a light cinnamon colour, with darker hackles spotted with black. These require cocks with plumage exactly the colour of wetted cinnamon. Both these are now become rare, and the latter are almost lost. They were common formerly in Dorsetshire, and were birds of marvellous weight. The cocks for the buff and lemon, should be the colour of the hens, but possessing the brilliant colouring of hackle and saddle peculiar to their sex. Black feathers must be carefully avoided. They are admissible in the tail, but one of a richly shaded chesnut is very preferable.

They are very good layers, and I have proved they sometimes lay twice in a day. I have known two instances of it, but I think the explanation I can give will bear out the opinion, it is not in the nature

of any hen to do so as a rule. The fowl in question more than once laid early, and again (in the summer) just before dark, one probably at four in the morning, and another at eight in the evening, thus two eggs in sixteen hours, but she never laid the following day; several times she did this, but very often the second egg had an imperfect shell, yielding to the slightest pressure. They seem to lay at a certain age, without any regard to weather or time of year, beginning soon after they are five months old; I have had pullets of that age laying regularly in very cold, frosty weather, when those of other breeds running with them, showed no signs of following their example, although hatched at the same time.

They do not lose their qualities as they get older, but they lose their beauty sooner than any other, and every year seems to increase the difficulty of moulting. The age of beauty in a Cochin China fowl is from nine to eighteen months; after this the hens become coarse, their feathers grow with difficulty, their fluff is a long time coming, and the beautiful intelligent head is exchanged for an old careworn expression of face. The tail of the cocks increases as they get older.

The commonest fault in these fowls at exhibitions, in the present day, is that both cocks and hens are shown with twisted combs. This should be avoided

in selecting breeding stock, as although the breeder may not care to exhibit, purchasers may, and the value of the stock is affected by it.

I have always found them hardy birds; the little naked, ostrich-like chickens doing well in bleak spots, without any unusual care.

I imported some black birds, and even the cocks remained true to colour.

Too much cannot be said in favour of their gentleness and contented disposition; a fence four feet high suffices to keep them from wandering, and they allow themselves to be taken from their perch, and replaced, to be handled, exhibited, or made any use of, without the least opposition. They are also most valuable in a yard as layers during the winter months, and sitters early in the year. They are broody when others are beginning to lay.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PENCILLED HAMBRO' FOWL is a beautiful bird. There are two sorts, the golden and the silver; they differ in one respect only, the foundation colour of one is white, the other a brown-yellow; one description will serve for both. They have bright red

double combs, which should be firmly fixed on the head, inclining to neither side, nor even being loose, ending in a point which should turn upwards; clear hackles, either white or yellow; taper blue legs, and ample tails; bodies and tails accurately pencilled with black everywhere except the neck. The more correct the marking, the more valuable the bird.

Their carriage is gay and proud; their shape is symmetry, and their appearance is altogether indicative of great cheerfulness, and carries an air of enjoyment, which always prepossesses in their favour.

The plumage of the cocks differs somewhat from the hens; they are very little speckled, if at all, except while chickens, when the wings and hinder parts are marked, but this seldom lasts after the first moult. In the silver variety, the cock is almost white, having sometimes a chesnut patch on the wing, and towards the tail some black spots, but these disappear as he gets older. The tail should be black, and the sickle feathers tinged with a reddish white, while in the golden cock they should be shaded with a rich bronze or copper. The cock of the golden is red all over, and both must have well defined white deaf-ears.

No fowls require more watching than these if it be desired to breed them for exhibition. Degeneracy

shows itself in the cocks either by a black tail, or one in which white or silver predominates, or by the absence of the white deaf-ear:—all these must be fatal to success. In the hens it is apparent in spotted hackles, and in patchy plumage. The delicate and distinct pencilling is lost, and a cloudy uneven mixture takes its place. This is fatal to them as exhibition birds.

The great virtue and merit of these fowls are, they are prodigious layers, and this is not brought about by any undue feeding, it is their nature. They are said never to sit, and as a rule it is true of them; not one in a thousand deviates from it, but when I lived in Davies Street, I had one at liberty; she stole a nest in a lumber room, and brought out a brood of chickens.

They are excellent guards in the country, for when disturbed in their roosting place, they are the noisiest of the noisy, and nothing but death or liberty will induce them to hold their peace. I think I may say with truth, they lay twice as many eggs as any others.

In these, as in other breeds, erroneous ideas and names have crept in, some being correct descriptions of the same fowl under another name, but others being imaginative, so far as real Hambro' fowls are concerned.

The Bolton bays and greys, and Chitteprats are identical with the Hambro'. There were also so-called Turkish and Creoles, which were the same.

As a general rule, it may be observed, no true bred Hambro' fowl has topknot, single comb, white legs, any approach to feather on the legs, white tail, or spotted hackle.

There is no bird that gains so much by change of climate as this does ; the British bred are infinitely stronger than the imported.

There is another Hambro' now at least admitted into that family. They were originally called Pheasant fowls, as that bird was accused of being the parent on one side with about as much truth as the story, that the Barnacle that adheres to the bottom of a ship, produces the goose that bears the same name. They were also called Moss fowls, then Moonies. This last name would seem to have some foundation, because the end of every feather should have a moon figured in black, on the yellow or white ground, according as they are gold or silver. They are very beautiful, gay and proud in carriage ; very full double and firmly fixed combs, with point at the end turning upwards ; dark rim round the eye, blue legs, mixed hackle.

Like the Pencilled varieties, these are of two sorts, the golden and the silver. There are few

breeds in which points are so scrupulously observed, and defects so insisted upon as in this. The Capulets and Montagues are Yorkshire and Lancashire. The former insist on black breasted cocks, the latter must have spangled. We hold with the latter. There was formerly a contest about the tails of the cocks. Some contended they should be hen-tailed, *i. e.*, have no sickles, streamers, coverts or turned feathers. This notion has however disappeared; and we may venture to give the principal points of these breeds, as admitted by most amateurs and exhibitors.

In golden cocks, the hackle should be clouded without any patches or rings of black, the saddle should be clouded or intermixed with black, the wing accurately barred and laced, the tail black, the breast well spangled. The comb full, thickly spiked, and well piked, turning upwards behind. The deaf-ear, small, round and perfectly white. The foundation colour of the body a rich dark red. The same rules, save as to size of comb, apply to the hens, but their bodies must be spangled.

In silver the cocks have not the same clouding in the hackle or saddle, but they require the same comb, deaf-ear, laced and barred wing. They must also have a white tail, every feather of which must be tipped with black. The pullets are subject to the

same laws of combs, ears, wings, and tails. They must also have clouded hackles, and their bodies must be accurately spangled. In each variety the legs must be blue.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SPANISH FOWL is easy to describe, as no variety of colour is admissible. These birds must be black throughout, richly shaded with metallic green lustre. A purely white face is imperatively necessary to constitute a perfect specimen. Care must be taken not to mistake the ear-lobe for the face, as in the very worst samples of the bird the former will be found quite white. In a first class bird this colour must be unmixed with red spots, and extend from the insertion of the comb to the gill, and from the ear-lobe to the beak. The ear-lobe must be large, pendant, thick, and quite free from any other colour. This part of the face is more developed in the cock than the hen; in fact, he has it much larger than any other fowl: it is composed of a double skin, forming a sort of bag. Very capital cocks are also

white between the wattles, but here the colour is in spots on a red ground, slightly shaded with a blue white. The cock should have a large upright comb, reaching to the nostril. His wattle should be very large and long; his breast round and protuberant; his tail ample; his carriage noble and very upright. The combs of the hens should fall over, and when in good condition be large enough to hide one side of the face. Their breasts are prominent, but not so much so as in the cocks. Their faces very long, thin and skinny. The points both sexes have in common are taper blue legs, and deviating from the required line of perfection in most other fowls, they should be long. In shape the body should slant downwards from the neck to the tail, and narrow from the shoulders, till at the end it approaches a point. In walking they carry themselves very upright.

They are invaluable layers, because, although they are only moderate feeders, their eggs are larger than those of any other fowl. We have seen them four-and-a-half ounces each. The difference between these eggs and those of any other fowl is so manifest, that they will always sell first, and realize a better price than any others in an open market. They are for the same reason more valuable for culinary purposes, three of them being equal to five of many

other breeds. They do not sit. The best time to rear them is between March and the end of May ; although not perhaps to be considered delicate chickens, so far as growth is concerned, yet it is certain they do not bear a check so well as many other breeds, and it is therefore well to watch them, that stimulants may be given in time. They are very naked when hatched, and are often a long time before they feather. They may be seen running about, with black feathers in their wings, and scarcely any other on their bodies. At this period they require to be covered very warmly at night. The great mortality among chickens of this breed is between two and four weeks old. This is a delicate period, and our experience is strongly in favour of a liberal use of bread and ale, at least twice every day. We also give bread and milk frequently, and cooked meat, chopped very fine, for instance, the knuckle of leg or shoulder of mutton. These fowls are rather more difficult to rear than many other ; but they repay for the labour, by their constant health, being perfectly free from most of the banes of the poultry-yard.

We do not believe it possible to communicate the roup to a Spanish fowl, but they are subject to a peculiar kind of swelled face, which comes first by the appearance of a small knob under the skin. It

increases till it has over-run one side of the face. We believe it to be incurable.

The sex of them is easily distinguished, as the cocks show their combs plainly at a month old. At this age we always look for growth in our Spanish chickens, but still watch them, to counteract any thing that may appear to be going wrong, and we repeat our only remedy is stimulants. Being always averse to over-stocking, we kill faulty cocks, at about seven or eight weeks old, if they show the greatest fault they can have, and the only one that is plainly developed at an early age, we mean, a drooping comb. The greatest merit a Spanish fowl can have is a perfectly white face ; but if a cock had the best and most faultless that was ever seen, it would not excuse or palliate a drooping comb. If, therefore, there is no desire to rear them for the table, such peccant cockerels should be killed as soon as the comb can be seen falling over, as there is no possibility they can ever repay even one day's food. The chickens, and the best of them commonly, indeed, almost always have white feathers in the flight of the wings, and if they appear when hatched, like magpies in colour, it need cause no apprehension, as it is a common thing, and they will become black.

It is almost impossible to name any time when

these fowls may be what is termed “weeded,” when the faulty and inferior may be cast aside for market or table, and the *élite* reserved for exhibition or breeding. Cocks show the white face earlier than pullets, indeed, we have known many that never had any red on any parts of their faces; but it is fair to add, they were precocious birds, and like most such prodigies, their excellence was confined to their youth, and in after life they could neither compare nor compete with those that took their time and ripened into excellence in due and natural course. We have no hope of a Spanish cock, if at twelve months old he has any red in his face. We would not even excuse that which some indulgent people would call only a blush, but the case is very different with pullets. We have been constantly mistaken, and therefore, warn others. We have many a time sold a draft pullet for a few shillings, and have been vexed by hearing soon afterwards she had made as many pounds.

At three months old, the lower part of a Spanish pullet's face should be whitening, then the same change should take place in front of the eye, and the skin above the eye should become brown, instead of red; then mixed, or spotted with white. The progress of the change in colour may now be slow, but should be gradual. The pale white skin, tinged

with blue, should become a dead opaque colour. The spots above the eye should enlarge and extend till but the shade of any colour remains. It is never safe to discard such a pullet as a bad one. But some may wish for directions to guide them in making selection among such as appear all promising. Choose cockerels with long legs, bold carriage, combs faultlessly upright and firm, ample tail, good width between the eye and the insertion of the comb, and blue legs. Pullets high on the legs, long taper bodies, long tails, and do not mind if the two long feathers look like young sickles, and turn over at the extremity. Look for long skinny faces, and long strong beaks. Do not be guided by forward and developed combs, unless the face has kept pace with them. If you have to choose between those that have large red combs and dark faces, and whitening faces with backward combs, do not hesitate to take the latter. The comb *must* come in due course, the face is not subject to any similar compulsion. If at twelve months, a pullet is only white below the eye, and deep dark angry red above, she may be got rid of without fear, she will never be perfect.

Lovers of these fowls have called them the aristocracy of poultry, and assuredly nothing can be prettier than a goodly troop of them, with their

glossy plumage of raven black, their snow white faces, and bright red combs, spreading over a park or meadow. They do not, however, reserve their favours for those who can afford them these expensive luxuries, they will live healthy, beautiful, prolific, and contented, in the smallest, darkest, and dirtiest back yard of a manufacturing town. It may, perhaps, amuse some, if I describe a place where I saw some of the best Spanish fowls I ever saw. I offered £10 for the cock, and £7 for the hens, ineffectually.

In a close suburb of London, was a row of small houses. Each had an outlet behind measuring about three yards by two. This space was partly occupied by a water butt, and the remainder was needed as a drying-ground, and play-ground for the young Londoners, &c. The amateur was a man of resource, and knowing the capabilities of the breed, he constructed a walk round the yard, resting against the wall and the house, and being five feet from the ground. It went round three sides of the yard, was two feet wide, and the same height, a small space at the end was covered, and afforded a roosting and laying place. It was made of common laths, nailed lattice fashion, except the bottom, which was close, and kept gravelled, while a cabbage suspended by its stalks afforded them green meat.

At times they had the luxury of a run in the yard ; but as a rule they lived in the place I have described, and I have never seen better or better conditioned birds than they were. It is contrary to my practice to relate anecdotes, or to use one unnecessary word ; but I know nothing that will illustrate the goodness of constitution, or the endurance of these fowls so well as that I have related. In preparing these birds for exhibition, it is unquestionable that they do better during the last fortnight before the show in comparative confinement than they do at full liberty, and it is essential that they do not have too much light—clever people must enquire why and wherefore such is the case, we have only to do with results, and if any be incredulous, they may try the experiment. Let them take a Spanish hen or pullet faulty faced, shut her up in a dark cage or box, keep her there for some days, and then look at her, they will see the improvement in consequence. One test of condition in the birds we speak of, more particularly of the pullets, is the state of the comb, which will be red, soft, and developed, just in proportion to the condition of the bird. While moulting—and they are almost naked during this process—the comb entirely shrivels up.

Birds of the highest strains will sometimes show foul feathers : the hens will have white spots—the

cocks red in the wing, hackle, or saddle. These are blots that a judge cannot overlook, but they are not necessarily hereditary, nor should an otherwise good bird be discarded as a breeder for these freaks of plumage. The amateur of these fowls, who expects to rear many first class fowls, will be doomed to disappointment. Even from the most carefully selected parents, the perfect birds will not be more than one in twelve, or not so many. But the others will be good saleable birds, and the two or four will always repay the expense and trouble of the lot. This is one of the old fashioned breeds—favourites of long standing in England, and will always be liked.

There are white Spanish fowls, but they are not much admired; the face, which forms so good a contrast with a black plumage, looks sickly and poor when put with feathers of the same colour; it is one of their vagaries in moulting to turn quite white. I have one now that has done so, and I know of many others. I once had a cock with a white ring, like that of a mallard, round his neck.

We formerly got all our best Spanish fowls from Holland, and still get some good ones; but the great demand for them in this country has nearly exhausted the market there. They are known as Minorcas in Devonshire, where there are great numbers that

have lost the white face, but retain the size, glossy plumage, and valuable laying properties of their ancestors.

We are not, however, writing for those only who look for perfection in their birds; we have, therefore, a word to say to those who care not, or who cannot afford to keep only perfect, and, consequently, expensive ones. All the beauties we have enumerated as characteristic of this breed, can be secured at a small cost, provided some spots of red on the face are overlooked or put up with. These birds are quite as vigorous and as free in laying as the most expensive that can be purchased. We leave them with advice to the amateur who lives in a small place in a close town, and, therefore, is perforce content to keep fowls and eat eggs, but is obliged to class chickens among unattainable luxuries, to adopt Spanish.

CHAPTER VIII.

BANTAMS have long been favourites in England, their small size, their beauty, and their impudence gaining them admirers. Many years since, only those that were feathered to the toes, were admired. The late

Sir John Sebright, by much attention and a thorough knowledge of the subject, succeeded in producing birds of surpassing beauty and symmetry. Those that bear his name are the most appreciated by fanciers ; they are of two colours, gold and silver ; they must have double combs, with pointed end rising upwards, and well seated on the head, firmly fixed, not inclining to one side, nor yet raised on a fleshy pedestal ; laced feathers, each being edged with black ; blue legs, without even the suspicion of a feather on them ; upright tail tipped with black at the point, which must be round and equal in width to the widest part of the feather. There should not be even a tendency to a curve in it. The side tail feathers rising from the back to the tail should also be flat, round topped, and accurately laced. There must be no hackle or saddle. In many respects they should closely resemble a hen cock. These are the principal points of the male. The hen requires the same comb, the same accurate lacing, the prominent breast, drooping wing ; her head should be very small, beak sharp. The carriage of these birds should resemble that of a good Fantail pigeon ; the head and tail should be carried up in the strut of the bird, till they nearly meet, and the wing should drop down the side instead of being carried up. In both sexes, the wing feathers should be tipped with black, and even the

long feathers laced. Like all other first class birds, these are difficult to get, and lest amateurs should be discouraged, I may almost venture to say, a faultless bird is hardly to be found. From the best bred parents, single combed chickens will constantly appear, but these will again produce perfect double combed progeny. Such are, however, only to be trusted when the possessor of them is sure, that although defective themselves, their parents were faultless in this particular. It is never advisable to breed from a faulty bird, if a perfect one can be had. Small size is a desideratum in these fowls, they are, therefore, seldom bred early, as growth is not desired. July is early enough to hatch them. Perfect cocks should not weigh more than seventeen ounces, nor hens more than fourteen.

None but those who understand the process, can imagine the difficulties of producing the Sebright bantams. They were the result of years, and can only now be kept up by frequent changes of blood ; if this be neglected, and the same stock is bred from year after year, the lacing first disappears, next the colours come in patches, and at last you get single combs, sickle feathers, and ugly yellow and black birds.

Other Bantams, to pretend to excellence, should be diminutive as the Sebright, and should have the

same arrogant gait. But they differ inasmuch as the males should be large cocks in miniature, with hackle, saddle, and fully developed tail. The rule of comb is not so imperative. In black and white birds it should be double, but it is not so necessary, nor does the substitution of a single one cause disqualification. In the black breed, white deaf-ears are necessary to excellence, and in both those of which we speak the sickle feathers should be long and well carried. No fowl has made more rapid or certain advances in public favour than the Game Bantam. At present we have duck-wings and black-breasted reds in numbers; we have seen some brown reds. The progress made justifies us in believing that ere long we shall have every variety of Game represented among these diminutive birds. They are subject to the same laws of matching as the game fowls, the cock must not have the strut of the bantam, but the bold, fearless, unquailing demeanour of the game; his wings must not droop, but must be carried close up to his body, and his feathers must be hard and close. As they are also subject to the same laws of colour and matching, they should be carefully mated with hens of the same breed, both as to feather and colour of legs. The hens should be longer than ordinary bantams, and like the cock, should be clean, hard, and rather

scanty of feather. They should also have the game head and expression of face, and have small, straight, upright, and numerous serrated combs. Feathered legged Bantams may be of any colour; the old fashioned birds were very small, falcon-hocked, and feathered with long quill feathers to the extremity of the toe. Many of them were bearded. They are now very scarce; indeed, till exhibitions brought them again into notice, these beautiful specimens of their tribe were all neglected and fast passing away. Nothing but the Sebright was cultivated, but now we bid fair to revive the pets of our ancestors in all their beauty.

We have recently seen several lots of Bantams brought from Japan, and have been much pleased with them. Some were quite white, some black and white. They had rather large heads, very ample combs, redundant plumage. Their legs are entirely concealed by it. They strut as they walk, throwing the tail up and the head back till they nearly meet. They are said to be the constant companions of man in the country they come from. We do not know enough about them yet to be able to say whether the expression of their face is the result of their bringing up, or whether it is the cause of their being such favourites, but it is certain they have an expression

of fun, drollery, and good nature, that would qualify them to take the part of Punch or Falstaff in a poultry amateur performance.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MALAY FOWL, though formerly much fancied and sought after, has of late years been suffered to decline. However unpalatable the truth may be to some who recollect the palmy days of competition, it must be said, this bird has fallen before the spirit of utility; it was not useful, and it has lost ground. It is a long, rather than a large bird, standing remarkably upright, falling in an almost uninterrupted slope from the head to the insertion of the tail, which is small and drooping, having very beautiful, though short, sickle feathers. It has a hard, cruel expression of face, a bold eye, pearled around the edge of the lids, a hard small comb, scarcely so long as the head, and having much the appearance of a double comb trimmed very small and then flattened; a red skinny face, very strong curved

beak, and the space for an inch below it on the throat destitute of feathers ; it has long yellow legs, quite clean ; it is remarkable for very hard plumage, and the hinder parts of the cock look like those of a game cock trimmed for fighting. The hen is of course smaller than the cock ; she has the same expression of face, the same curious comb, and in both sexes, the plumage should be so hard, that when handled, it should feel as though one feather covered the whole body ; from this cause the wings of the hen are more prominent than in other fowls, projecting something like those of a carrier pigeon, though in a less degree. It is a beauty in these birds if the projections or knobs of flesh at the crop, on the end wing joint, and at the top of the breast, are naked and red. They are good layers and sitters ; their eggs have a dark shell, and are said to be superior in flavour to any other.

The original colours were, cocks of a bright rich red, with black breast ; and hen of a light chocolate or cinnamon colour, generally one entire shade, but in some instances, the hackles were darker than the rest of the plumage. We have since had beautiful white specimens, and a few years ago, there was a handsome breed of them coloured like some of the game piles.

They have a great virtue ; they will live any-

where; they will inhabit a back yard of small dimensions: they will scratch in the dust hole, and roost under the water butt; and yet not only lay well, but show in good condition when requisite.

CHAPTER X.

GAME FOWLS.—Although there are many different strains of game fowls, the distinctions are so dependent on colour, that the description of one suffices for all, as the points are identical.

All Englishmen have a sort of liking for a game cock, although many abhor cock fighting, and hundreds who dread their combats still cling to the breed. There are two sets of amateurs, one looks only to beauty of plumage; the other, careless of feather, scans closely those points that will tell in the pit. If fowls were not wanted for the table, and if perfect symmetry, beautiful colour, hardihood and daring, were all that was required of them, the amateur might possess duckwings, piles, or black breasted reds, or any other of the numerous varieties, and rest content. He would indeed be obliged to

limit the number of his pets, because the males will not agree ; and unless the young cocks are looked upon with pride, as those that are to figure in a main, there is always sadness in seeing sprightly ones growing up, because it is certain they must be got rid of in some way, or they will fight among themselves till but two or three remain. Nor is this propensity confined to cocks ; high-bred hens are quite as pugnacious, and fatal contests between them are things of common occurrence.

The game cock is of bold carriage ; his comb is single, bright red and upright ; his face and wattle a beautiful red colour ; the expression of countenance fearless, but without the cruelty of the Malay ; the eye very full and bright ; the beak strong, curved, well fixed in the head, and very stout at the roots. The breast should be full, perfectly straight, the body round in hand, broad between the shoulders, and tapering to the tail, having the shape of a flat-iron. The thighs hard, short, and round, the leg stout, the foot flat and strong, and the spur not high on the leg. The wings are so placed on the body as to be available for sudden and rapid springs. The feathers should be hard, very strong in quills, and like the Malay it should seem as though all their feathers were glued together till they felt like one.

A game cock in hand should be what fanciers call

“clever,” every proportion should be in perfect harmony, and the bird placed on his breast in the palm of the hand should exactly balance.

This is another of those breeds where any deviation from perfection is fatal. It has been well said, “A perfect one is not too good, and therefore an imperfect one is not good enough.” Abundant plumage, long soft hackles and saddles, too much tail, or a tail carried squirrel fashion over the back; the least deviation from straightness of the breast-bone, long thighs, in-knees, weak beaks, or coarse heads are all faults and should be avoided. These birds are dubbed before they are shown, and this should be neatly performed, every superfluous piece of skin and flesh being removed, so that the head should stand out of the hackle, as though it were shaven. The plumage should also be so scanty that the shape of the bird, especially the tapering of the back and the roundness of the body may be seen, every feather should feel as if made of whalebone, and if raised with the finger should fall into its original place. It should be almost impossible to ruffle the plumage of a game cock. The tail should be rather small than otherwise, and be carried somewhat drooping. The plumage of these birds is trimmed before they fight—this is called “cutting out,”—and the less there is to remove in

the way of feather, the better the bird. They are in every respect fighting birds, and we think every one sees a set-to between two of them with pleasure, if it occurs as they pass through a yard. The hens should be like the cocks allowing for difference of sex, the necks and heads fine, legs taper, plumage hard, and combs small, upright, and serrated. Hens should not be chosen with large or loose combs, and they should handle as hard as the cocks.

A word or two may not be out of place as to the table properties of this beautiful breed. It is true they are in no way fit for the fattening coop. They cannot bear the extra food without excitement, and that is not favourable to obesity. Nevertheless they have their merits. If they are reared like pheasants round a keeper's house, and allowed to run semi-wild in the woods, to frequent sunny banks and dry ditches, they will grow up like them; they will have little fat, but they will be full of meat. They must be eaten young, and a game pullet four or five months old, caught up wild in this way, and killed two days before she is eaten, is, perhaps, the most delicious chicken there is, in point of flavour.

CHAPTER XI.

THE original POLAND FOWLS were Black with white top-knots, and Gold and Silver spangled. There was formerly a breed of White with black top-knot, but that is lost. There are now White, Black, Spangled, and Chamois. The three first are well known, and amenable to rule both in description and judging. The others may be called in process of formation. Before treating of them generally, a few remarks are necessary on the subject of beards. These appendages were not admired till recently, and it is still a question of dispute, whether the pure bird should have them or not. Individual opinion can have but little weight in deciding a difficult point, unless some proof can be brought in support of it. I am not the partisan of one or the other, but as at Exhibitions all are classed together, and objections have been taken by the amateurs of bearded birds, that those destitute of that addition should be allowed to take prizes, I think it but fair to state as an importer of very many years standing, that among the early birds brought from the Continent, not one in a hundred was bearded, and those that were so were often rejected. The first really good pen I ever saw was at the show held in the

Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, in 1846. They were exhibited by the late Lord Saye and Sele, and being successful in gaining a medal, were christened, in honour of their owner, "Belvedere" Fowls, that being the name of His Lordship's seat. Those who judged in the early days of shows can recollect when the bearded were the exceptions. I am not the partisan of either, but I thought a few words called for in favour of those who have not yet joined the "beard and moustache movement."

The foregoing is allowed to remain in print to show the effect of a few years on a pursuit, an unbearded pen of Polands is now seldom or never seen.

The crest of the Poland cock should be composed of straight feathers, something like those of a hackle or saddle; they should grow from the centre of the crown, and fall over outside, forming a circular crest. That of the hen should be made up of feathers growing out, and turning in at the extremity, till they form a large top-knot, which should in shape resemble a cauliflower. It should be as nearly round as possible, and firm. The largest top-knots are often made up of loose feathers, that give it an uneven and accidented appearance. Now, however large these may be, they cannot compare or compete with symmetrical and firm, though smaller ones.

The carriage is upright, and the breast more protuberant than in any other fowl, save the Sebright bantam. The body is very round and full, slightly tapering to the tail, which is carried erect, and which is ample, spreading towards the extremity in the hen, and having well-defined sickle feathers in the cock. The legs should be lead-coloured, or black, and rather short than otherwise.

In the black species, there should be no white feathers save in the top-knot; in that it is desirable there should be no black ones, but I have never yet seen any without them. It is a very common practice to cut them off close to the skin, so that it appears perfect, but at the first moult they re-appear.

In the golden and silver varieties, the spangling of the feathers should be black, and as correct and regular as possible; the ground colour should be rich golden tint in the one, and frosted silver in the other. In both cocks and hens the wings should be laced, each feather should have a black marking running the length of it, and when the wing is closed, it should show three or four stripes, terminated on each feather by a distinct black spangle. There exists difference of opinion as to the marking of the breast of the cock; some like it dark, others spangled. My own opinion inclines to the latter. The colour

of the top-knot is another open question. Some admit white feathers, indeed prefer them ; others would consider them a grievous fault. I hold with the latter ; but it is only fair to say, the white feathers are generally the result of age, and it is almost impossible to get a two years' old hen, without white in the top-knot. I have seen spangled birds with pure white top-knots, and they were very handsome, but I still think they should be entirely of the same colour as the fowls ; every feather should be laced like those of a Sebright bantam, although I admit it will be impossible to get them quite so distinct.

In the cocks of the Black breed with white top-knots, gills are allowed but no combs. For Golden and Silver Spangled neither comb nor gills, nor even the least spikes can be tolerated. The same improvement is required in Silver Spangled Polands as in Silver Spangled Hambro's, and tails are required to be clear white with a black spot at the end of each feather. The lacing of the wings of all the Spangled Polands is essential both for cocks and hens, and while the coloured top-knots should be composed of *laced* feathers, those on the body should be *spangled*. Anxious to give every information and unwilling to impose an impossible task on any one, it is well I should state that in the black

with white top-knots, it is impossible to get them without black feathers in front. These are immaterial and should always be left. Trimming is seldom an advantage, and is mostly detected, always if competent judges see the birds on which it is exercised; as certain appearances cannot be naturally accomplished, however much they may be desired, and therefore breed suspicion. White feathers are not desirable in the top-knots of the Golden Poland hens, but they are always there, and they increase as they get older.

These birds are very subject to deformity, and crooked backs are common among them. The amateur who wishes to purchase will do well when he holds the bird in his left hand, to lay the palm of his right flat on its back. In passing it gently down he will often detect one hip, *i. e.*, the insertion of the thigh-bone higher than the other; or he will find a curve in the back-bone from the hips to the tail. As these are transmitted to their offspring, and it is often difficult to get good crosses, such birds should always be rejected.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BRAMAH POOTRA FOWL. When some years ago I began writing on the Cochin China Fowl, I stated that owing to the difference of opinion that existed, I approached them with diffidence. I may say the same now about the Brahma Pootra, but my notions are strengthened by the reflection, that all I have written is the result of observation and close study during some years. It is unquestionable that we have much to learn and discover about them, but we know enough to form an accurate opinion. We have in them diversity of colour and comb, but we have the same in the Dorking; yet few will pretend that a rose-combed cock of that breed is not as pure as a single, or that a slate or brown hen is not as true as the most fastidiously correct Grey or Speckle. As I at the outset advocated their claim to the honour of being a distinct breed, I now say I have seen nothing to alter my opinion. In all adverse writers there is a total absence of argument, but a lavish use of the assertion that they are Cochins and nothing else. One only point has been touched upon, which is similarity of shape. Now what is this argument worth? Whether they come from China or India we will not stop to

discuss. It is enough that they come from the East, from Asia. The deficiency of tail is the characteristic of all their Fowls—Cochins, Brahmas, Malays. Even the Jungle fowl (the Hyæna for wildness of all Gallinacæ, and one that can well be called untameable), although the most favoured of his country in the way of tail, carries it drooping. That the eggs are alike in colour cannot weigh, because all our Asiatic birds lay cream or chocolate coloured. If feathered legs are to prove their identity with Cochins, then from that I would deduce proof of their distinctness. Out of large numbers I have bred I have never had a clean-legged chicken. If the tables were turned, an Asiatic with equal truth might affirm, there is but one breed in England, because all are clean legged, have ample tails, and lay white eggs. If Dorkings were first imported into any independent state, and had a run for two or three years, when Hamburgs or Game took their places, we should, if parties took the same views they do in this country, have the importers of the latter advertising their new breeds, and the holders of the former striving their best to prove that all were identical, although differing in many essential points.

I will now give my ideas and experiences of these birds, and shall honestly tell all I know. If, when we know more, I am proved to be wrong, I shall at

once admit my error. If right, I shall have nothing to add or retract.

That these fowls are of Asiatic origin is beyond dispute, and that they partake of the principal characteristics of the birds of that quarter of the globe, is also undeniable. Still in my opinion the difference between them is marked, although perhaps made up of apparent trifles. Take an analogous case. The Ortolan is a bird unknown in England, the yellow-hammer is common. To an inexperienced eye, or to a man fresh from a town, one would at any time pass for the other. People have given opinions on these fowls, without taking the pains to ascertain whether they were formed on pure specimens. They have judged their habits where they were confined in small spaces. It is a common remark that an Englishman is recognized as such everywhere, while men of other countries are merely known as foreigners: but this distinction is only perceptible to those who know the characteristics of the inhabitants of the different countries. A New Zealander would class all as white men. Now I honestly believe many of our correspondents on Fowls are in the position of this New Zealander. I have imported and bred these Fowls for two years; I have watched them narrowly, and find they differ in many points from the Cochin, with which they are sought to be identified. They

wander from home, and they will get their own living; they never throw a clean legged chicken; they have deep breasts; they lay larger eggs, and they are hardier. I have hatched them in snow, and have reared them all out of doors without any other shelter than a piece of mat or carpet thrown over the coop at night. From any birds that I have kept I have never had an untrue chicken, all being more or less grey. They are hatched almost black or yellow, and the dark get lighter, and the light darker. I have never had a clean legged or a five clawed chicken from them. From some fresh imported hens, I have had out of a hundred, some three or four brown chickens, which I am keeping to see what they will be. They proved cross-bred birds. I take little notice of it, because I cannot know their parentage, but from my own birds kept through the season, I have not had one faulty chicken in any particular. They eat less than the Cochins. They differ in combs, some being single, some pea-combed. The latter has never been seen on any other fowl. It has the appearance of three combs pressed closely together, that in the centre being higher than the others. Another thing worthy of remark is, that in many of the single combs, close observation will show on either side the plain impression of another, the evident remains of that which had been a pea-comb, and by interbreed-

ing had disappeared. I would define the points of a choice specimen thus : pea-comb, protuberant breast, strutting carriage, well feathered yellow legs, flat back between the hackle and the tail, and the latter full of feathers, the principal ones diverging as in a black cock. The under feathers of both cocks and hens should be dark. The most perfect specimens should have for the cocks, mottled breasts, dark tails, light hackles and saddles ; the hens all over the body pencilled like the Silver Pheasant, and with what we should call in others, a silver hackle. I do not undertake to say these only are pure, nor would I seek to disqualify those that are single combed. There may be variety in that respect as in Dorkings, and I have seen very beautiful birds white, save the hackle, tail, and flight which were black.

I have reprinted the foregoing, because there still remain unbelievers about these valuable fowls. Years have passed, and I again reprint I have never bred a clean legged or five clawed one, nor a buff one. This year (1863) they have hatched as true as Silver or Golden Hambro's. They are among the best winter layers we have, they rank among the very prolific producers of eggs throughout the year, they seem to be as hardy as it is possible for fowls to be, they are good sitters and mothers, and good for the table. Although they appeared at a time

when people were suffering from the effect of the decline of the Cochin mania, they held their own ; they have made way, and have succeeded in forming numerous and attractive classes. Their purity and the possibility of breeding them truly are proved by the long success of some exhibitors, and the array of some beautiful pens which are always seen at the principal shows, are alike in the main particulars. The white birds with black flights and tails, and striped hackles, have proved themselves as fine and good as the pencilled. The colour is entirely matter of taste.

Since the publication of my last edition, we have had some valuable importations of new breeds from France. They have become sufficiently known and exhibited to demand a notice. We give one, admitting our obligation to the excellent work published by Mr. Jacque in Paris, "Le Poulailier," which has enabled us to give many details that would otherwise be wanting, notwithstanding we have kept and bred these birds for two years.

THE HOUDAN has short thick legs, and a round well proportioned body, large head, small top-knot falling backward like a lark's crest. It is bearded, and has five claws on each foot. It is a good sized fowl, weighing when fully grown, cock 6lbs., hen

from 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. to 5lbs. The plumage should be speckled, white, black and straw colour. The comb is the most remarkable part of this bird, and we cannot do better than quote our before named authority: "Comb—Triple, transversal in the direction of the beak, composed of two flattened spikes, of long and rectangular form, opening from right to left like two leaves of a book; thick, fleshy, and variegated at the edges. A third spike grows between these two, having somewhat the shape of an irregular strawberry, and the size of a long nut. Another quite detached from the others, and about the size of a pea, should show between the nostrils and above the beak." This gives the bird a grotesque appearance, and there is an air of impudent drollery and humour about him that is peculiar to the breed. The legs are dark leaden grey. In this breed the hens approach more nearly the weight of the cock than is usual. The hen is bearded and top-knotted, the latter appendage almost concealing the eyes. These fowls are very popular in France, as layers and table fowls. We have little experience of them in the last capacity; their dark legs are disliked in England; but as, hardy birds, and excellent layers, we can speak well of them.

THE CREVECŒUR is, perhaps, better known than

any French Fowl, having been extensively bred in England during the last two years. Our experience is that it is one of the best layers we have ever met with, not only on account of number, but also of size, being equal in this respect to the Spanish. It is a short legged breed, square bodied, deep chest, well shaped for the table.

Like most of these breeds, it is bearded and top-knotted, but the latter appendage is not that of the Poland. It is more like a crest, and allows room in front for the comb. This is singularly shaped, and we shall again quote M. Jacque: "Comb.—Various, but always forming two horns, sometimes parallel, straight and fleshy; sometimes joined at the base, slightly notched, pointed and separating at their extremities; sometimes adding to this latter description interior ramifications like the horns of a young stag." The same author says: "The comb, shaped like horns, gives the Crevecœur the appearance of a devil." The legs should be black or very dark slate blue. The plumage should be entirely black, with bright blue, and green metallic lustre, except the feathers of the belly which are dark brown. The top-knot, as in Polands, will become partly white, after moulting two or three times.

Many have their hackles, saddles, and wing coverts straw colour. These are not less pure, and

they will breed black chickens, but they are less esteemed by very particular amateurs. We have found as in some other breeds, it is easier to breed a dozen pullets true to colour than one cock, and in all black breeds the cocks will throw foul feathers at times. The hens should weigh from 5lbs. to 6lbs. each; the cock 7lbs. to $7\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. Just as the Houdan has a roguish air and deportment, so the Crevecœur is staid, solemn and grave. They may be said to represent two of their countrymen—Robert Macaire and M. Guizot.

LA FLECHE. This is a singular bird, and no description will serve better than that of M. Jacque: "A strong firm body, well seated on its legs, and long muscular feet, appearing less than it really is because the feathers are close; every muscular part well developed; black plumage.

"The La Flèche is the tallest of all French cocks; it has many points of resemblance with the Spanish, from which I believe it to be descended, by crossing with the Crevecœur. Others believe that it is connected with the Bréda, which it does, in fact, resemble in some particulars. It has white, loose and transparent skin; short juicy and delicate flesh, which puts on fat easily." We have had many of the best specimens of this bird during the last two

years, and have bred some excellent chickens. They are very good layers of large eggs. In this particular they are superior, like the Crevecœur, to any breed we know, except the Spanish, and if there be anything in breed, making one species better than another for laying in the winter, we should give the preference to these. We cannot say as much for their table properties. We do not think them as good for the table as the Dorking, and their black legs will always be an objection to them in England.

The La Flèche has the body of the Spanish, placed on legs that are forward, being immediately under the breast rather than the body of the bird. It has a very bold, cheerful lively face, but the general impression is curious from the extraordinary comb, which we will describe from M. Jacque. "Transversal, double, forming two horns bending forward, united at their base, divided at their summits, sometimes even and pointed, sometimes having ramifications on the inner sides. A little double *combling* protrudes from the upper part of the nostrils, and although hardly as large as a pea, this *combling* which surmounts the sort of rising formed by the protrusion of the nostrils, contributes to the singular aspect of the head. This measured prominence of the comb, seems to add to the charac-

teristic depression of the beak, and gives the bird a likeness to a rhinoceros."

It should have a large deaf ear, perfectly white; not so large as the Spanish, but larger than that of any other fowl. It has slate blue legs, darker or lighter according to age, turning to a spotted grey as they get old.

It should be entirely black, but it is no disadvantage if it has a few white spots on the crown. The abdominal feathers are sometimes brown, and like the Spanish, the flight of the wing is sometimes white till after the first moult.

The hen differs from the cock, only by having a smaller comb. She must have a white earlobe.

These are a peculiar but a stylish breed. They are very good layers, and we have found the chickens easy to rear. Their dark legs are unsightly on the table.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE various class at the different exhibitions has brought prominently before the public numbers of different birds that were before but little known:

We will begin with Creepies, Bakies, or Dumpies. The first were exhibited some years since by His late Royal Highness the Prince Consort at Birmingham. These had more appearance of distinctness of breed than any I have seen since. They were in feather somewhat like inferior silver pencilled Hambro's. They were ridiculously close to the ground. In those we have seen since, uniformity of feather is sadly wanted, and unless it can be accomplished, I fear the fact of their being very short legged will not gain them a position in the prize list. It is also necessary that they should either all have four or five claws, as if cross-bred, they deserve nothing, and if pure, they should be well defined. They were formerly well known and common in Scotland, and had the reputation of being excellent layers. Their principal points are large bodies, very full in hand, ample tail carried erect, very long and perfect sickle feathers, and proud carriage. Legs almost imperceptible. For some time these birds disappeared, but of late we have seen several pens, apparently well selected, arguing the means of choice on the part of their possessors.

CHAPTER XIV.

PTARMIGAN FOWLS.—The origin of these birds is enveloped in mystery. It is the opinion of many amateurs that they may be made by crossing the old feather-legged white Bantam cock with the white Poland hen. The shape and appearance of the bird would favour the idea, but in the face of the assurance of the breeders that they are pure, and breed true, we are bound to admit it. They are birds of pleasing appearance, gay carriage, rather upright than otherwise. Colour pure white; legs heavily feathered with stout quill feathers to the toe. Vulture-hocked; the feathers reaching nearly to the ground. Tail ample in both sexes and carried well up; the body rather small and very round and plump in the hand; legs white. The top-knot of the cock should differ from all others, inasmuch as it should rise from the head in long feathers, and projecting forwards beyond the beak, curl upwards at the extremity something like the principal feathers of the crest of the cockatoo. That of the hen, on the contrary, although ample, falls back like a lark crest.

THE FRIESLAND OR FRIZZLED FOWL.—This bird

for many years was better known in England as the French Fowl; it has little merit beyond its extraordinary plumage. Every feather should be stiffly curled, and the flight feathers of the wings should be little more than quills. As no pains have been taken to breed them, those exhibited generally vary in colour both of feathers and legs. They have no class, and unless amateurs are more particular, they will lose all chance of distinction, as other breeds will eclipse them.

THE JAPANESE BANTAM OR SILKY FOWL.—There is no question of the purity of these extraordinary birds, as they have been known many years in this country. They are covered with white hair instead of feathers, but the wings have long quills in them. Their faces, flesh, combs, legs and bones are blue; the deaf-ear varies, inasmuch as it shows white under the metallic tinge. Many have five toes, double combs, and small top-knots; others lack these distinctions. Their chief points are, purely white plumage, blue skin and bones throughout. They are hardy, cheerful, and pleasing birds for those to keep who admire curiosities. They are average layers, and excellent sitters and mothers. They are said to be good for the table, but their appearance is so repulsive, few have had the courage

to taste them. They make capital sitters and mothers for any small breed of fowls or game.

THE RUMPKIN or RUMPLESS FOWL is another competitor in the various classes of an exhibition. If it had a tail, and were consequently not what it is, it would be a pretty bird. It is a pure breed, and admits of description. It has a remarkably sharp, intelligent face, round body, very full breast, and taper legs. It is, doubtless, the absence of tail that gives the appearance, but it has more of rotundity in shape than any fowl I know. There is no settled colour for them, but they are generally brown or black.

THE EMU or SILKY COCHIN is of recent introduction. They are an accidental variety. In giving such an unqualified opinion, I should give my reasons for it; they are as follow :

I had a walk of Buff Cochins, from which I bred two years in succession; the next year, out of about sixty chickens, nineteen were silky; and they were not partially so, but they were without a feather on them—they still retained their uniform buff colour. I have observed and pointed out to many amateurs at shows where I have been judging, a tendency to this variety in the specimens exhibited. The first indication is at the extremity of the wing feathers

and the covering of the thighs, it looks like an extension of the fluff over the feathers. The birds disappeared as suddenly as they came. I bred from the same birds for two years, and breed still at the same place, but have never seen one since the foregoing was published.

THE ANDALUSIAN FOWL.—This bird has most points in common with the Spanish, of which it is, in the opinion of most judges, an off-shoot. The chief difference is in colour; being, instead of black, of a slate blue, shaded with darker tints. They are long on the leg; the hen has a drooping comb; that of the cock should be upright. They are handsome and stately birds, said to be very hardy, and excellent layers. Although they have been exhibited for years, they have not yet been deemed of sufficient importance to deserve a place in a distinct class. It is however but fair to state, that good specimens are seldom shown without being distinguished by the judges. They should have the white deaf-ear, but are not required to have the white face.

THE RANGOON FOWL.—These are little known; they have nevertheless been often exhibited and have always taken a prize but once. They have much the same character as the Malay, but the neck and

head are not so skinny, nor have they the same cruelty of expression in the face. They are capable of being made very heavy, as the hens in ordinary condition weigh from eight to nine pounds each, and the cocks ten. They are of upright carriage, tail rather drooping : their legs are of bright yellow, and their plumage of a deep, dark red spotted with white, exactly like the red speckled Dorkings, known as Sir John Cathcart's. It is some time since we have seen any of these.

THE ANCONA FOWL.—This remarkable bird, although it has been before the public for some years, has made little progress in becoming a favourite. It is not surprising, as it is more curious than handsome. Its chief peculiarity is a comb of most unusual size, which hangs over, entirely concealing one side of the face ; its wattles are also very long and large. It is rather undersized than otherwise, and short-legged. The common colour is black, intermixed with white feathers. They are said to be prolific layers, and to produce unusually large eggs.

THE DORKING FOWL.

CHAPTER XV.

HOWEVER reluctant those concerned with poultry may be to acknowledge the fact, it is not the less true that most old women who live in cottages know better how to rear chickens than any other persons ; they are more successful, and it may be traced to the fact, that they keep but few fowls, that these fowls are allowed to run freely in the house, to roll in the ashes, to approach the fire, and to pick up any crumbs or eatable morsels they find on the ground, and are nursed with the greatest care and indulgence.

I have already stated, I believe, the grey, or speckled Dorking, to be the best fowl there is for the table ; and, as the first consideration is the breeding stock, I would advise, in an ordinary farm-yard, to begin with twelve hens and two cocks, the latter should agree well together.

Too much pains cannot be taken in selecting the breeding fowls ; they should not only be of the best breed but the best of the breed. I would choose them with small heads, taper necks, broad shoulders,

square bodies, white legs, and well-defined five claws on each foot ; touching the claws, it will sometimes happen that breeding from cock and pullet, each five clawed, chickens will come, lacking that distinctive mark ; it does not follow there is any fault in the breed, as the produce of these chickens will probably be five-clawed, but it should only be tolerated in home-bred chickens ; in buying for stock, I would insist not only on the presence of the five claws but on every other characteristic of the breed being prominent.

It may be well here to state why the speckled, or grey, are to be preferred to the white Dorking. They are larger, hardier, and fatten more readily, and although it may appear anomalous it is not less true that white feathered poultry has a tendency to yellowness in the flesh and fat.

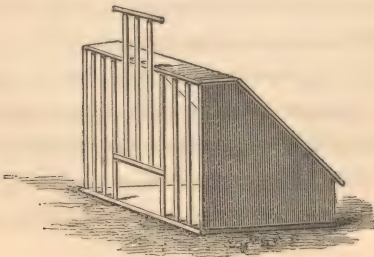
Having the stock, the next point will be breeding. I am a great advocate for choosing young birds for this purpose, and with that view would advise that perfect early pullets be selected every year for stock the following season, and put with two-year old cocks ; for instance, pullets hatched in May, they attain their growth and become perfect in shape, size, and health, before the chills of winter. They should be put with cocks of two years old, when they will lay on the first appearance of mild weather, and their produce has the same advantage as these have had before

them. I do not advocate having young stock fowls so much on account of their laying early as I do for the superiority of their breeding. Neither is it desirable to breed from fowls of all the same age. Where it can be done, it is better to put a two year old cock with pullets, and *vice versâ*. A pullet, such as I describe, will often begin to lay directly after Christmas, but I would not allow her to sit her first eggs, they seldom produce good chickens, and if the weather (as frequently happens) prove unfavourable, many of the eggs fail to hatch. The second sitting may, however, be depended upon. It is well to introduce fresh cocks of pure breed, into the yard every second year; this prevents degeneracy, and for the same reason, no cock should be kept for more than three seasons, nor hen more than four, if it is intended to keep them in the highest possible perfection and efficiency.

Of hatching I will say very little, as the hen will do that naturally, and consequently well. A hen will cover and hatch fifteen eggs; all nests should be on the ground, and the hens should be watched, else, when a sitting hen has left her nest for a short time, another will steal in and lay among the eggs already sat on; this is an evil, as it causes irregular and imperfect hatching: it unsettles the hen, and the chickens are not properly attended to by her. It is a very common thing for a hen to steal her nest in a

hedge, or other protected spot; if she choose a secure place she should not be disturbed, as these hens often bring out the best broods.

I give below a sketch of the best rip I have yet found for hen and chickens. Its dimensions should be 24 inches high in front, 18 wide in front, and 24 in depth. It should be solid everywhere save in front; that should be made of bars, and the three centre ones should lift up by means of a cross piece. It must not have a bottom. The hen should be kept in the coop, or rather under it, at least six weeks, and in the winter the longer she is under it the better; the coops should be often moved, to give the young brood the advantage of as much sun as possible, as this promotes their growth, and also prevents the ground from becoming tainted. It is always advisable where space will permit, that fresh ground be chosen for the different broods during the breeding season; thus one part in April, another in May, and so on.



CHAPTER XVI.

IT is too often presumed that little care is required as to the feeding of poultry from the time they leave the coop until the time they are put up for fattening. They are allowed the run of the yard, without considering what a precarious subsistence this affords ; there may be abundance of food at some periods and little or none at others. They should be fed regularly, and care should be taken that each of them (for they are all either to be brought up for the table or for stock) shall have a fair share.

It is well, from the first, to feed the hen and her chickens in the following manner :—instead of throwing down handfuls of whole corn let it be ground and slaked with lukewarm milk, to such consistence that when a ball of it is thrown on the ground it will break and scatter about in particles ; if there be green meat, such as onion tops, chopped fine and mixed with it so much the better. They should be fed only so long as they will run after it, as soon as they are careless about it they have had enough. They may also have chopped egg, roasted or boiled mutton chopped fine, in fact, a continual change. They should be fed every hour. As they get older

this may be gradually discontinued, until they feed with the old fowls. But even with old birds a change of food is not only advantageous but necessary ; and I would therefore advise that twice per week the food be changed for a day or two, and boiled or crushed corn substituted for meal. They must also have constant opportunities of pecking among grass and other herbs. Fowls in confinement will starve and pine to death, with heaps of barley around them, unless they have these opportunities.

Next as to water. It is too much the idea that any description will do, and that provided there be some within their reach, though it have been there a week, nothing more is required. This is a mistake. Water for fowls and chickens should be very clean ; the vessel containing it should be well rinsed out every morning ; it is a good plan to put a little gravel at the bottom, and it should be changed twice a day. I am aware many will be disposed to think this unnecessary, but I will ask anyone who has the opportunity to try whether, where there is a stream of water running through a yard, they can cause the poultry to forsake it by placing water nearer to their haunts : it will always be found they prefer going to the stream to drinking out of the pan or tub.

Many gentlemen who take pains in breeding

poultry, and all gamekeepers, will say how advantageous it is for fowls, pheasants and all gallinaceous birds to have a constant supply of pure clean water. There is little doubt many of the diseases of poultry arise from the filthy water they are often obliged to drink from ponds full of decayed vegetable matter, and tainted by the fall of leaves in autumn and winter, from overhanging trees.

The well-doing of chickens depends on the observance of these apparent trifles. I know fowls will grow up without it, will lay, sit, hatch, and rear their young, but they only produce the fowls so universally complained of at the tables of the nobility and gentry when in the country. I also know the fowls brought to the London market have not half the care I inculcate bestowed on them; but, on the other hand, it must be borne in mind the hen that hatches an early brood of chickens plays an important part in a cottage; her young are put in flannel in a basket before the fire (and the children are driven away to make room for her), she and her brood live in-doors, they pick up every crumb, and share every meal.

This is because her progeny will often in May realize from two to three pounds; in fact, very often the hen buys the pig that forms the winter food of the family: the poor man or woman tries by such

indulgence to compensate for the scarcity of food which their situation renders unavoidable.

As the chickens get older they will require feeding less often, but they must never be allowed to fall off in condition, and after from ten or twelve weeks in the summer, or from fourteen to eighteen in the winter, they will be ready to fatten, if required.

CHAPTER XVII.

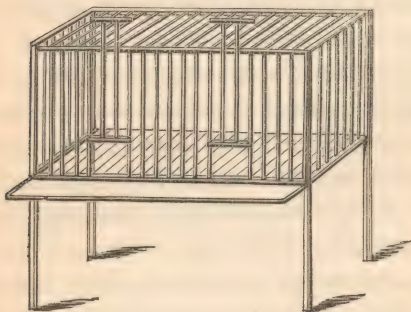
THERE are two methods of fattening ; one is by feeding in troughs, these are called peckers ; another is by cramming. Where merely a good useful fowl is required the first process will suffice, but when it is wished to make a fowl equal to those found in the London market the second must be resorted to ; in both cases such a coop or pen as I will endeavour to describe will be required.

A coop for twelve fowls should be twenty-four inches high, three feet long, and twenty-two inches deep ; it should stand about two feet from the ground, the

front made of bars of about three inches apart, the bottom also made of bars about an inch and a half apart to ensure cleanliness, and made to run the length of the coop, so that the fowl constantly stands when feeding or resting, in the position of perching; the sides, back, and top, indeed, the whole of the coop should be made of bars as in the sketch. The bars of which it is made should be an inch and a half wide. Some people make them round, and I am not sure they are not preferable to flat ones. Fattening fowls do not require much room, exercise is not favourable to the process, and it is, therefore, important that the room given to each bird should be only so much as will enable it to stand up or sit in tolerable comfort. More than this retards the operation. For this reason there are two slides to the coop. These not only make the task of catching the fowls much easier, but they are very useful when the coop is wanted for a smaller number of birds. If only four are required, and they have the same space allowed to them as to twelve, they will make little progress. It is therefore necessary to have a board or division made, which by passing between the bars from front to back will make a coop of the size required.

There should be a trough in front of the

coop, and I much prefer it wedge-shaped, thus,  to the square ones generally in use. It is much easier to clean. It only requires a flat board, running along the front of the coop, having a groove cut in it to receive the bottom of the trough, and an upright piece at the edge to support it. It is easily moveable, which is necessary, as it must be scalded once every day to keep it sweet.



This trough must be filled three times a day with food, the quantity being regulated by the number of fowls fattening; the food should be oatmeal mixed slack, but not quite liquid, the consistence being such that if some of it were placed on the flat board in front of the coop, although it would spread, it would not

run off. It may be mixed with water, but milk is much better; in fact, it should always be borne in mind, the food cannot be too good or too clean. It is also essentially necessary that sound discretion be used in the quantity of food given; no more should be given than is eaten up clean at a time, and at every meal it should be fresh mixed food; when the time arrives for the mid-day feed, if there remain any uneaten from the morning in the trough, it is a proof either that too much was given before, or that the fowls are sick: if the first, let them fast till the evening; if the second alter the character of the food, by mixing it either slacker or stiffer; but in both cases the food which has been left must be taken away, or it will turn sour, and the fowls will take a distaste for it, which will prevent their fattening; there should be pans continually before them containing fresh clean water, and when the troughs are removed for scalding, and while they are drying, there should be gravel spread on the ledge before them; they will pick out the small stones to assist digestion, which greatly promotes their health.

Another very excellent thing is to cut a turf, well covered with grass, and place occasionally before them. No better proof will be required of this being good for them than the avidity with which it will be

eaten. All these things assist health, and for a fowl to be good on the table it must be healthy when alive. By this process a fowl put up in good flesh and condition will be fat enough for ordinary purposes in about ten or fourteen days.

It will be observed I inculcate the greatest cleanliness throughout. Cleanliness is one essential: another that the fowls be fed early in the morning, as soon as the sun rises, for they will be then waiting for their food. If the first meal of a fowl is deferred till seven or eight o'clock on a summer's day, the bird has been hungry, restless and dissatisfied four hours, and in that time the progress made towards fattening the previous day has been fretted away.

This remark applies both to pecking and the succeeding method of fattening.

The next process is cramming. The coop must be precisely similar to that used for peckers. The number of these coops must depend on the supply of fowls that is required, as they should not always be in use lest they become tainted. They are so inexpensive and so easily made it is not worth while to incur any risk of this sort, and after one has been in use for a month, it is always well that it should be washed, exposed to the air for as long time as it can be spared, and if lime-whited so much the better.

The fowls for cramming are put in this coop, and if wanted very fat in a short time, the best of those fed by the former process may be selected, and in a week they will be very good ; but if not in a hurry then good fleshy young fowls should be put up and fed as follows ; but (in this and the former method) care must be taken to put up fowls that have been accustomed to be together ; if strange fowls are put in the same coop they will fight, and, if so, they will not fatten ; nor is that all, from the continual excitement they will become hard. It will sometimes happen even a pullet is quarrelsome, if so, she must be taken from the coop and kept separate, or she will interfere with the well doing of the lot. If fowls are to thrive, they must be warm. The heat and steam of the birds should be perceptible to the hand when it is put in. For this purpose they must be close to each other, and the coop should be covered up with old sacks, carpet, matting, or anything of the sort.

The food is the same as before, viz., oatmeal mixed with milk, and if it is wished to make the fowls very fat, a little mutton suet may be boiled in the milk with which the oatmeal is slaked ; the only difference being it is mixed stiffer, it must now retain the form given to it. A cram should be about the size of a woman's finger and an inch and a

half long, six or eight are given morning and evening, that is enough to fill the fowl's crop.

The crams should be rolled up as dry as possible, and in order to render the swallowing easy, previous to being given, they should be dipped in milk or pot-liquor; women perform this operation better than men; the fowl is placed in the lap, the head is held up, and the beak being kept open with the thumb and finger, the cram is introduced into the gullet, the beak is then closed, and the cram is gently assisted down till it reaches the crop: care must be taken not to pinch the throat, as ulceration would follow, and the fowl would be spoiled. If at mid-day the fowls appear restless and dissatisfied a very little food may be given to them in the same way as to peckers. They must also be well supplied with water and gravel.

It will sometimes happen that when the time arrives for the evening meal, that of the morning has not digested; therefore, before the second feed is given, the crop should be lightly felt to see if it be empty; if it is not, there is proof something is wrong; the fowl must be taken out immediately, and the beak being held open, as if for cramming, some warm water or gruel should be poured down the throat, and the beak closed: the bird will swallow it,

and it will soften the food, but if more food were forced into the crop, on that already hardening there, the fowl would become crop-bound ; *i. e.*, the food would become solid and indigestible, and the fowl would be totally spoiled for the table, if it did not die.

By the foregoing process a fowl may be made perfectly fat and good in fourteen to sixteen days ; there is no necessity to feed longer, unless large size be desired, when feeding may be continued three weeks ; I prefer the former period, because the fowl then is fat enough and in perfect health, but frequently afterwards, although it will get fatter and apparently larger, it will lose both weight and flesh ; the latter becomes red and dry, the internal fat impedes the exercise of the functions of digestion, and the fowl becomes diseased ; it is what poulterers term “clung,” and arises from disease of the liver, caused by excessive fat.

There is no possible method by which a fowl may be kept fattening and in perfect health after it has reached the acmé of fatness ; it must then be killed, or it will become worthless.

When put up, either for pecking or cramming, the birds must be in some sort of building, completely sheltered from cold and draughts ; when the

weather is chilly, they should be covered with sacks or matting, as warmth is very essential in causing them to thrive.

I believe attention to these trifling details will remedy one of the complaints urged against country poultry, viz., that it is too lean.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I WILL now endeavour to remove another objection, that it is hard.

I see little difficulty here, as it may be prevented by attention to simple arrangements.

I consider there are two causes, first, the poultry is too old; next it is eaten too fresh.

Fowls should be put up to fatten at from twelve to fourteen weeks old in the summer, and from sixteen to twenty in the winter; the difference is caused by the fact that in warm weather they arrive at maturity much sooner than in cold; and when a fowl is arrived at maturity it is too old for the table.

It is a mistake to keep a fowl until it is too old, for the sake of having it large. It is true it looks

handsome on the table, but it is useless there. Perhaps part of the breast may be eaten, but the legs are far too hard to furnish any part of a meal. Still size is much to be desired, and it can be attained by following the rule laid down for feeding chickens well from the first, and the increase in size and weight during the fortnight's fattening is almost incredible to those who have never observed it.

But to be tender the fowl must be young. There is no process by which an old one can be made good for the table; and surely, though it may be a shade less, it is better to have a good juicy fowl, which all will eat with relish, than a larger one, which from its hardness, cannot be enjoyed.

Another complaint often made is, that although a good fowl is to be had sometimes, there is no certainty. The poultry is one day good, the next day bad: this arises from the fact, that the fowls are improperly selected; that if six fowls are wanted they will, perhaps, be taken promiscuously from six different broods. This is very wrong: the oldest brood should be cleared off before the next is begun. It may be said there is only a difference of three weeks or a month between them; but in the summer and autumn a month turns the pullet into a hen, and consequently unfits her for the table.

The next cause for their being hard is they are

eaten too fresh. I use the term fresh in a qualified sense. A really young fowl does not require keeping to become tender, because it is naturally so, but if eaten the day it is killed it must be stringy in the mouth, as every member of the body is still rigid; forty-eight hours will be quite long enough to keep such a fowl.

But, in spite of all care, there will sometimes be fowls beyond the age I have specified as the proper time for killing; and then, by keeping them some days, they will become more tender.

The reason for this is simple: if a fowl be caught up out of a farm yard, or taken out of a coop, full of food, and killed directly, as is too much the custom, the food in the body and crop ferments, and at last corrupts the flesh; but if the bird be fasted, *i.e.*, kept entirely without food or water from twelve to fifteen hours before it is killed, it will be found quite empty, and in moderate weather will keep from four to six days, during which period it becomes tender. In the winter it may be kept much longer.

CHAPTER XIX.

EXHIBITION POULTRY.

THERE is neither so much profit, nor so much honour in gaining prizes with bought birds, as with those that have been bred at home. As a rule, those who are in a position to give the largest sums, are not those who pay the most attention to their birds, and it goes far to equalize probabilities to find that it is almost impossible one person should possess all the advantages requisite to success. The produce of the best birds in the world, if only moderately attended to, will not be better than those of merely good ones favoured by every advantage.

If it is wished to show at early shows, say in June, July, and August, the chickens should be hatched early in January, and this process is the more advisable because of late years, January and February are more favourable for rearing chickens than March, one thing alone excepted, that the nights are longer. About the middle of December, two or three hens should each be set in a warm sheltered spot, and each should have seven eggs from selected birds, above all such as have no

capital defect or lack of any virtue. Grant that five chickens are hatched under each, it is enough and as many as she can rear. It will take at least fifteen chickens hatched to produce six at a show in June. It is easy to give any quantity of food, and to supply any amount of heat, but it must always be impossible to give sufficient nourishment in eight hours, to last for, and to carry chickens over the twenty-four. It will therefore be necessary to feed them twice after dark, and this is done for those that are intended only for the London market, and never hope for any distinction beyond that of being spring chickens and eaten with asparagus. Say that the last daylight meal is at four o'clock, then at eight give another by candle-light. The rip will be in a shed or out-house covered carefully so as to exclude any cold air. Place a dark board on which the food, curd, egg, or bread and milk will be easily seen in front, and then raising a corner of the covering immediately before the board, throw down the light of the candle on it, and call the chickens. They will feed and return to the hen. Let the hen feed at the same time, as she learns to look for it, and she calls the chickens. Repeat the meal at eleven, and again at seven, and the night is reduced to eight hours fasting which the chickens can bear without injury. As they grow, if either of them

shows any great defect, fatten it for spit or market, and reserve all your care for those that promise to make a good return. Of course this is only needed for those that are hatched early, the later ones do not require it, they have nature on their side, and she is a good nurse. These very early chickens are not wanted for late shows; the produce of April and May will always beat them. Where many fowls are bred from a good stock, and kept in a farm yard affording all necessary food, we should be content to leave all together, even though we intended exhibition. Weight is never the principal points in fowls. It is more important in December and the later winter shows, than it is between August and November. At this last period that which is looked for in a prize-taker is a large frame. The food has been expended in height, length, and breadth, and while this is the case there will be no weight and fat. That which stops the growth and induces fattening lessens the probability of success. We think well of those prize fowls about which in September, hyper-critical observers shake their heads and say they are leggy. Give such the two months that will elapse before Bingley Hall calls for them, and they will be mentioned; but the heavy, squab, round-headed, fat pullets, the young hens in September, will never grow any larger. Being then sure the

chickens, although having only a farm yard run, have all they require in the way of food, we would let all run together, but we should always keep our eyes on those we meant for exhibition. Where all chickens cannot have the same advantages, then those that give most promise must have the preference. But if six or eight chickens are wanted, at least eighteen should be selected. They want only a good roosting place, plenty of good food, not given all at once, but very frequently, and a good run. All fowls should be together for some days before they go to a show, and being on the same walk is not enough, they should be daily confined in a small space. If this precaution is not taken, success is constantly marred by the pen being deficient of one hen, torn to pieces, or at least eaten so far as the scalp and back of the neck are concerned. This is more frequently the work of the hen, than of the cock, and when they are put together if one begins to beat the other, and is allowed to do so without resistance, it is useless to dream of their agreeing, and madness to think of showing them together. As a hen or pullet is frequently spoiled for exhibition in a few minutes, it may be worth while to describe the first appearances of an intended aggression. The pugnacious hen will begin by raising herself on tip-toe, till she can look down on

her antagonist, then dropping her wings, and raising her hackle, she will strike the first blow. If this is submitted to there is no hope for the beaten. She should be removed; they will never agree, and she will be eaten. It may be asked why these things do not occur in yards; the reason is simple, because the space allows room for the victim to escape, but it is one of the inexplicable things of poultry that in presence of a pugnacious mate, a hen or pullet tries no resistance, she endeavours to find an outlet for flight; failing that, she chooses a corner into which she thrusts her head, and thus "accepting the situation" she stands still while she is eaten. But without fighting they sometimes disagree, and then they show to disadvantage, because the weakest bird is always out of sight. It will prevent the probability of fighting and considerably augment the possibility of success, if both pullets are of the same age. The older beats the younger, and this disparity has a bad effect, it does away with the perfection of a pen, and altho' owners may sometimes fancy that one of the three birds composing it may be good enough to "pull it through anything," yet judges have to do with "the pen," and not with any particular bird composing it. This will perhaps be the place where I should mention a common fault in exhibitors who send two pens composed of three

excellent and three inferior birds, so divided as to form perhaps one third class and one highly commended, or two highly commended pens: whereas a different selection would make one of unusual merit. If an amateur who wishes to exhibit, has fifteen fowls to choose from, and to form a pen of a cock and two hens, he should study and scan them closely while feeding at his feet in the morning. He should then have a place similar to an exhibition pen, wherein he can place the selected birds; they should be raised to the height at which he can best see them, and before he has looked long at them, defects will become apparent one after the other, till in all probability neither of the subjects of his first selection will go to the show. We also advise him rather to look for defects than to dwell on beauties, the latter are always prominent enough. The pen of which we speak, should be a moveable one, for convenience sake, and it is well to leave the fowls in it for a time that they may become accustomed to each other, and also to an exhibition pen.

In all birds, save those in which white plumage is desirable, we advise that fowls should run at liberty till they are wanted to send away, Dorking, Cochins, Brahma Pootras, and all golden birds. Spanish are improved by confinement in a dark place, for some days before showing, giving just

enough of light to enable them to pick their food, and to perch. They should also be littered with straw, as cleanliness has much to do with the success of these birds. Game fowls should be kept up for a few days, and fed on bread, meal, barley, and peas. These latter make the plumage hard, but they must be used sparingly as they have a tendency to fatten. White feathered birds, such as Silver Pencilled Hambro's, the top-knots of Silver Polands, the tails of Silver Spangled, all require washing. This is not difficult. Put a handful of soda in a bowl of warm water. Immerse the fowl entirely, rinse thoroughly with cold water, wipe with a flannel, and place in a basket with soft straw before a fire to dry.

All fowls should have their legs washed clean, before they are sent to a show, scurf or dead skin should be removed from the comb, dry dirt from the beak, stains from the plumage.

Baskets in which they are packed should *always* be *round*, high enough for the cocks to stand upright, and covered with canvas. If a single covering of canvas is not deemed enough, it may be double, and the space between filled with hay, no injury can then by any possibility or accident be done to the birds. But if the basket be square, feathers must be broken, and if the top be un-

yielding wicker-work, whether it be top-knot or comb that comes in contact with it, it must suffer by being flattened. Fowls should be thoroughly fed before they leave for a show, but the food should be soft. Sopped or steeped bread are excellent. Hard food is to be avoided, because the digestion will have to take place without help from exercise, gravel, or anything else. This is more important than may appear at first, when it is considered they will probably undergo the ordeal of judging within a few hours of their departure from home, and that indigestion is accompanied by sickly and ruffled plumage, dulness of colour, dark comb, and yellow face. In cold weather it is necessary they should have plenty of straw in their baskets, for warmth sake, and when fowls go frequently to shows, the straw should be renewed every time. Discretion must be used. In summer and early autumn, wheaten straw in small quantities, in late autumn and winter, when cold nights may be looked for, a larger proportion of oat or barley. Fowls are not chilly, but they dislike draughts, and even in the guard's-van, there are chinks and crannies, through which there is an active current. They are also left in open and exposed spots at stations, and then the warm straw plays a useful part.

In fowls as in other things, "Let well alone," is

a good and useful motto. When they return from a show, looking in perfect health, do nothing; but if combs be dark, or crops be hard, a table spoonful of castor oil is valuable medicine and proper treatment. Where it is convenient, it is useful to have a spare run where birds can be put down on their return from shows, and subjected, if necessary, to an especial treatment; I do not say this is necessary, especially in the present day. They seldom require any other treatment than purgatives to remove the accumulations of three or four days of unnatural appetite, undue feeding from mistaken kindness, and perhaps rubbish from the bottom of the cages.

There are things so generally known, it would seem ridiculous to mention them, yet we shall not be justified in leaving them out. We speak of one of them when we remind exhibitors, birds in a pen must match as to comb and colour of legs. That is not a prize-taking pen which differs in any particular.

We hope we shall not be thought to be setting a hard task before our friends, when we describe what perfect birds should be. The result of the last few years has proved the possibility, almost the ease of accomplishing whatever may be required. Take Spanish cocks for instance. The worst bird in

the single cock class at the Crystal Palace show in February was better than the celebrated Champion of former days, if judged according to the requirements of the present times. Hambro's all have white deaf-ears, formerly they were the exception. Silver Polands and Spangled Hambro's have faultless tails. They were said to be impossible. These facts prove how possible it is to attain excellence, and they are worth chapters of letter-press.

EXHIBITION FOWLS.

DORKINGS.

COCKS.

Black, or Black and white breast and tail, light hackle and saddle.

HENS.

Slate colour, ash, cobweb speckled with brown or black. Any colour but black and white.

Such as these are *invariably* the heaviest and largest birds.

SILVER GREY.

Entirely black breast and tail, white hackle and saddle. No speck of white on the black, no buff, brown, or red on the white can be allowed.

Hackles of alternate black and white stripes, the latter predominating. Body of light grey, the shaft of each feather being white. Robin breast.

CUCKOO.

Cocks and hens alike. Body of very light blue slate colour, each feather marked at the end with a darker shade. Although the same regularity and

delicacy of markings are not required as in the feathered breeds, as Polands and Hambro's, yet good specimens show a very pleasing uniformity.

RED SPECKLED DORKINGS.

COCKS.

Breast, black, red, or either colour spotted with white. Tail black or black and white. Hackle and saddle red or spotted.

HENS.

Hackle, dark deep brown, or brown striped with gold; body, chocolate or light brown, spotted with white.

All Dorkings of both sexes, should have deep square bodies, broad backs, very full breasts, and white legs. The symmetry of the body will be easily judged and ascertained, if being viewed as if divested of head, legs, and tail, it presents a square. They may have single or double combs.

HAMBRO' FOWLS.

PENCILLED.

Double combs, full of points, ending in a stout pike turning upwards. This must be firmly fixed on the head. It

Double comb firmly seated on the head, and scrupulously straight, full of points, and like that of the cock, piked

COCKS.

must not protrude nor hang over, nor must it be hollow in the centre. Even if firm it must not incline to either side. White deaf-ear, size, shape, and colour of a new fourpenny piece. If larger, it should not exceed a sixpence in size. Ample tail, foundation colour black, but every feather should be laced on both sides with silver or gold. The black should predominate, and the silver or gold should be only an edging. White or red body, sometimes a little spotted at the hinder parts, and on the extremity of the wings. Blue legs.

HENS.

behind and turning upwards. Deaf-ear, small, round, and perfectly white. Hackle quite clear from spots. Body pencilled all over from the end of the white hackle to the tip of the tail, and if perfection be sought, the plumage of the hen should bear taking feather by feather and scrutinizing. Each should have ten or more distinct markings, and tail coverts still more.

These remarks apply alike to Golden and Silver with this difference, that the ground colour of one is dark gold, the other white. In both the breast

should be protuberant, the body round, the legs blue the tails ample, and the whole carriage of the bird pleasing and cheerful.

GOLDEN SPANGLED.

COCKS.

Large double comb, full of points, but neither overhanging the eye nor the nostrils; the points clear and sharp, not smoothed over till the comb looks like a fungus. Full pike behind turning upwards. Dark rim round the eye. Round smallish deaf-ear, brilliantly white. Well spangled breast; barred and laced wing; full black tail; blue legs; cheerful carriage. The under part of plumage bright buff. The hackle of the cock well clouded, and, if possible, the colour so distributed as

HENS.

Bright red, spiked and piked, moderate - sized comb, firmly seated on the centre of the head, without the slightest deviation to either side. Dark but not black hackle. Body spangled all over, wings laced and barred, under feathers deep buff. The colour of the body should be deep and rich, the spangling, barring, and lacing correct, sharply defined, and bright with metallic lustre. The deaf-ear snowy white, small and round; legs taper and blue. It is very essential the pike of the comb

COCKS.

to present no patches or circles of black. The saddle should also be well clouded. All the colours should be rich especially on the wing, where a metallic black should bar and lace on a deep red or maroon ground.

The cock of the Silver Spangled is not shaded or clouded like the Golden in the hackle and saddle, but he requires to have his tail quite white, with the exception of a black point at the extremity of each feather. A most accurately span-gled breast is also required.

HENS.

should incline upwards.

The hen of the Silver variety requires all these points, and in addition a thoroughly clouded hackle, and a clear tail spotted at the end with black. Nothing is more important than the clouded hackle.

BLACK HAMBRO'S.

These birds are subject to the same rules as the other breeds, simplified by the fact the plumage is

of one colour only. The combs must be spiked, piked firm and straight as in the others, and the deaf-ear scrupulously white.

SPANISH.

COCKS.

Large comb, and perfectly upright. It should also be even on its surface, having no indentation popularly known as the thumb-mark in front. Spotless white face from the comb to the throat. Long, deep, smooth, white ear-lobe; very full tail. Erect, haughty carriage, unmixed plumage, long blue legs.

Both cocks and hens have in common rich metallic lustre on the plumage. They should also be rather leggy than otherwise.

No bird pays better for care in preparing for exhibition than this does. No other bird presents such a contrast as the white face, red comb, and black feather. The white face is indispensable to success, and is perhaps the most important point in

HENS.

Large, soft, smooth, red comb, hanging over, and concealing one side of the face. Face thoroughly white. Very full breast; body tapering to the tail which is very full, and carried erect. Long thin skinny face, strong long beaks, and long blue legs; long ear-lobe, perfectly white.

judging; but it must be borne in mind that not any excellence in this respect can palliate a drooping comb in the cock, or an upright one in a hen. Many birds have a much better face on one side than the other. No amount of white on one side will counterbalance red on the other.

POLISH FOWLS.

WHITE CRESTED BLACK.

Cocks and Hens.

Black lustrous plumage; top-knots white as may be without trimming; leaden blue legs; prominent breasts; very full tails, and straight even backs. The cock and hens must have gills, but the cock must have no comb nor even spikes in front.

SILVER SPANGLED.

COCKS.

Ample top-knot, well filled with coloured feathers, and not lying flat on the head. Well spangled breast, wing

HENS.

Full, firm top-knot made up of laced feathers, and growing upward and close. Mixed hackle. Body accurately

COCKS.

laced and barred. Tail white, every feather being tipped with black. Hackle and saddle black and white clouded. No comb, gills, or spikes.

HENS.

spangled all over. Wing laced and barred. White tail tipped with black. No gills. Full breast, and round body. Blue legs.

GOLDEN.

As above in all points, save that the tail instead of being tipped with black is of that colour throughout, black in the coverts, and the tail centre, but having rich orange shades on each side.

As above, except as regards the tail and the top-knot; the former being black, or nearly so, while the top-knot should be composed of black feathers edged with yellow.

There is in most Polands a tendency to deformity, but especially in the Blacks. It is always a disqualification at a show.

COCHIN CHINA FOWLS.

Upright comb, with correct and numerous combs small, sharp intelligent head, scrupu-

COCKS.

serrations; ample hackle and saddle; gradual slant from the head to the centre of the back, and rising thence to the tail. Very fluffy thighs and hinder parts; bright eye, long deaf-ear and wattle. Very little tail, and made up of numerous small curly feathers that seem to roll over the back, rather than to stand up as in other birds. Legs feathered to the toes; wings tightly clipped up; upright carriage; bright good eye.

HENS.

lously straight, full of well-defined serrations. Thighs and hinder parts entirely hidden in soft silky fluff; short legs, feathered to the toe; short thick-looking necks; head carried rather forward than upright. There should be a gradual rise of feathers from the middle of the back to the tip of the tail, which should end in a round point.

LEMON AND BUFF.

Cocks and Pullets alike in colour.

GROUSE AND PARTRIDGE.

Black breasts; hackle	Plumage brown all
and saddle black, shaded	over, with as little yellow

COCKS.

on red, or very rich gold;
tail black; legs yellow
and well feathered.

HENS.

tinge as can be, and the
feathers marked or pen-
cilled as in the Grouse.
Feathered yellow legs.

CINNAMONS, see page 35.

WHITE.

Points same as in others, but well feathered yellow legs indispensable, and vulture hocks not desirable.

G A M E .

Bright red comb, wattle, and face; strong stout beak, slightly curved; round hard body, tapering to the tail; short round hard thigh; stout leg; flat foot; spur low, near to the foot. Scanty plumage, but very hard. The bird	Sharp intelligent head, strong slightly curved beak; taper leg; small comb, with numerous serrations, quite straight and upright; prominent breast; very hard feather. Body tapering to the tail, but round in hand. Straight breast; gay and
--	--

COCKS.

should handle whole, as if clothed with one feather ; the tail scanty, and carried rather drooping than otherwise. The head should be moderate in size, but fine in shape, sharp and snake-like ; very bright eye. The whole expression fearless, but more dignified than saucy.

HENS.

bold carriage ; flat foot ; and close tail.

COLOUR.

BLACK BREASTED REDS.

Deep, rich, red and maroon plumage ; black breast, thighs, and tail.	Brown body, each feather shaft being light ; light breast and hackle.
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DUCK-WINGED.

Very light straw hackle and saddle ; black tail, breast, and thigh ; copper saddle, and duck wing ; with the Mallard colour.	Nutmeg body ; silver hackles ; and salmon breast.
---	---

There is also the Silver Duck-wing. All red, or copper or salmon, is a mistake in these birds.

PILES.

Red and White. Ginger and White. The cock most distinctly marked, as the saddle and wing should be heavily splashed with the darkest shade of the colour. The tail should be mixed, all the rest of the body should be white. The hens must have less white. Nearly the whole of the plumage should be covered with a rich deep cream colour, and it is especially desirable white should not predominate in any part of the body.

There is another Pile, formerly common in Worcestershire, coloured like the preceding, with this difference, that black feathers are intermixed almost artistically with the other plumage.

BROWN REDS.

COCKS.

Black and red striped hackle and saddle; black tail: black breast, richly striped or shaded on every feather with bright brown; very deep red and maroon wing.

HENS.

Very dark brown, with an indistinct under shade of gold just visible here and there; gold striped hackle.

Black and Whites merely require to be perfect in

colour. There are other breeds and other shades, but it is not necessary to go into detail with them; all that is necessary to have the cock well dubbed. All the birds in the pen to match scrupulously in the colour of their legs; and to observe the same care in selecting hens that will be fitting mates for the cock.

BANTAMS.

GOLDEN AND SILVER SEBRIGHT.

COCKS.

Well formed double comb, full of points, quite firm, and straight upon the head, piked behind, and the pike turning upwards. No hackle or saddle feathers. Hen-tail, without the suspicion of a sickle feather, clear of any mixture of colour, save a black tip at the end of each feather. Breast very prominent, head carried back, and the wings

HENS.

Double comb of moderate size; plumage correctly laced throughout; clear tail, having only the black tip; blue legs; round body; full breast, proud carriage.

COCKS.

drooping till they nearly touch the ground. Blue legs ; each feather accurately laced.

HENS.

GAME BANTAMS.

These must be coloured like Game Fowls. They must also resemble them in shape, carriage and hardness of feather. The cock must not droop his wings. He must carry them up close, and must have the bold carriage of the Game, instead of the strutting gait of the Bantam. The hen must exchange the loose feather, round head, and quiet matron-like air of the Bantam hen, for the close feather, hard body, snake head, serrated single comb, and somewhat fierce look of the Game hen.

In Black Bantams, all should have clear, small, white deaf-ears, small red double combs ; and the cocks should have very long sickle feathers. In both Black and White, single and double combs are equally admissible, in both also the cocks must have streaming tails. The white deaf-ear is not so important in the white as in the black.

M A L A Y.

Strong beak ; pearl	Same points as in the
eye ; naked throat ; hard	cock, except that the tail

COCKS.

skinny face; round, hard, and scantily feathered body; firm flattened comb; crop, point of breast and wing, red and naked. Large head, sloping body, and drooping tail; clean legs.

HENS.

is carried more upright, but not as in other fowls, and is more scanty.

A choice specimen standing erect should present three curves, one from the head to the shoulders, one from the shoulder to the tail, and one from the root to the extremity of it.

BRAHMA POOTRA.

DARK.

Pea or single comb ;	Bodies delicately pen-
the former preferred.	cilled all over. Silver
The breast black	hackle ; deep body ; yel-
speckled with white ;	low legs, well feathered ;
thighs black ; hackle	pea or single comb.
and saddle light ; tail	
black, and spreading at	
the end like that of a	
black cock. Yellow legs,	
very well feathered,	
deep breast ; very full	
hackle.	

LIGHT.

Cocks and Hens alike, but the cock frequently less marked than the hen. Entirely white plumage, save the tail and flight feathers, which are black, and the hackle, which is black striped. These should also have well feathered yellow legs, and either pea or single combs. The under feathers of these birds should be dark.

CREVECEUR.

COCKS.

Square, thick and heavy body; short blue legs; top-knot and beard; long wattles; two distinct spirals in front; sometimes plain, sometimes uneven, but always erect. Very large open nostrils. Entirely black plumage desirable, but seldom to be had. It is a great point to have it black.

HENS.

Square, thick and heavy body; short blue legs; top-knot and beard. A chicken of the year should be entirely black. It is difficult to continue this plumage to the adult state, but it is very desirable. The top-knot should be large, and the beard should be larger at bottom than at top. Some birds of this breed show many coloured feathers, it is a disadvantage in competition.

L A F L È C H E.

COCKS.

Tall up-standing, long legged bird. Two small spikes in lieu of comb, placed on the head immediately above the eyes. One small spike growing above and between the nostrils. Very long gills. Entirely black and close hard plumage; ample tail, carried upright; body slanting to a point towards the tail like the Spanish. Leaden blue legs; large white deaf-ear; small top-knot or crest falling backwards.

HENS.

Same carriage as the cock. Same singular comb and nostrils. Tail carried rather down than otherwise. Black close plumage; long blue legs; large white deaf-ear. Round body, very heavy in hand. Dark blue legs.

H O U D A N.

Short legs; round body; five claws on each foot; long gills and beard, large head, party colored

Nearly as large as the cock; round heavy body, five claws on each foot. Large head; either half

COCKS.

plumage; top-knot. Triple comb of flattened spikes, opening from right to left and jagged at the edges, another spike lower down, that may be of any form.

HENS.

or entire top-knot; bearded and feathered face; beard full, but not long; scarcely any comb, gills, or deaf-ears. The top-knot should nearly hide the eyes. Blue or black legs.

TECHNICAL TERMS,

USED IN DESCRIBING POULTRY.

Hackle.—The feathers growing from the neck, and covering the shoulders, and part of the back.

Saddle.—Those growing from the end of the back, and falling over the side.

Fluff.—The silky feathers on the thighs and hinder parts of the Cochin China Fowl.

Dubbing.—Cutting off the comb and gills of a cock.

Tail coverts.—The feathers that grow on either side of the tail. These are longer than body feathers, and shorter than those of the tail.

Flight.—The last five feathers of the wing.

Vulture-hocked.—Feathers growing from the thigh, and projecting backwards below the knee.

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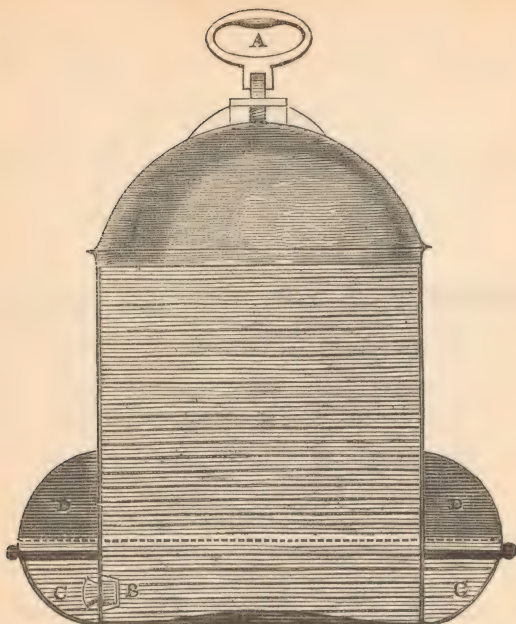
It has long been desirable to possess a cure for that bane of the Poultry-yard, the Roup, and after being submitted to every and the most severe tests, these Pills have accomplished it. The first symptom of the disease is a laboured breathing on the part of the fowl; the skin below the lower bill is inflated and emptied at every respiration. In this stage of the disorder one pill given every night makes a cure in a few days. In extreme cases, where the nostrils are stopped, the head swollen, and the bird offensive, it is well to wash the head, face, and eyes with vinegar and water every morning, and administer one pill every night. If the case prove very obstinate, two pills may be given every third night instead of one, but this is seldom necessary.

Where fowls are drooping, without any visible malady, one pill every night for two or three nights will remove every unfavourable symptom. In all cases a dose of one table spoonful of Castor-oil should be given six hours, before the first pill.

Fowls returning from Exhibitions should always be treated with the oil, and then with pills, for two or three days, and in all cases fed entirely on oatmeal slaked with warm water.

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